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ISRAEL AND ORTHODOXY

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BY

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PREFACE

THE book has been written, as I trust that its title will suggest, with the view of proving to its readers that "British-Israelism" is no "ism" at all : that we who hold British-Israel as true, are definitely persuaded also of the truth of that Creed which is commonly called "Catholic."

So many books and pamphlets have been written against British-Israel, condemning it as "heresy," "blasphemous," "Satanic," that I have felt called, as a convinced believer in Christianity, and an orthodox minister of the Anglican Church ; as one who wholly accepts the Creeds and Articles of that Church, without any "mental reservations ;" to set out the full agreement of British-Israel with "Orthodoxy" in its truest and best sense. As one who was saved out of agnosticism by British-Israel, I trust that God will use this book, both to allay doubt, and to convince the gainsayer.

GUY F. WADDINGTON.

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ISRAEL AND ORTHODOXY

CHAPTER I

THE LOGIC OF BRITISH-ISRAEL

ON August 21st, 1931 there appeared in the *Church Times* an answer to a question on British-Israel by some correspondent. The editor declared that the case only required stating for its absurdity to be manifest. Then he went completely astray by stating that "it is obvious that David's Throne (upon which these theorists build so much of their case) is in heaven." But will he or anyone else tell us *why* it is manifestly absurd to speak of the British as descended from Israel?

We must have some ancestry of some sort. Why is it absurd to say that Israel is that ancestry? I am quite sure that if I wrote some thesis upon the derivation of the British from some aboriginal tribe from the Highlands of China, there is no editor or scholar who would cry out against its "manifest absurdity." Nay, rather would the newspaper seize upon the wonderful discovery of "this deeply versed scholar," and I should be invited to declare my views before the British Association. Some authorities claim that Gomer (Gen. x, 2) is the founder of the British race. Scientific historians wax eloquent over the Teutonic theory; completely oblivious to the known differences between the British and the Prussians; and delightfully innocent of Teutonic characteristics.

No one says to them, "Manifestly absurd." But to claim Israel as our father in race is "manifestly absurd."

Surely the absurdity is on the part of those who attempt to refute a case they have not examined, and who imagine that their unsupported statement is sufficient argument.

Again, it is a known historical fact that for 450 years, *at least*, David's Throne was on earth, in the city of Jerusalem. When, where, and how, was it conveyed to heaven ?

Surely it *is* manifestly absurd to speak of David's Throne as being in heaven ? Surely that is sheer nonsense ? Yet we are soberly assured by a scholarly editor of a Church paper that Jesus Christ sits on David's Throne in heaven.

To what amazing passes will men go in their anxiety to set a great Bible cause aside.

Let us be fair ; let us be honest ; let us refuse to be carried away by blind prejudice.

Let us examine the matter to see if there is anything really worth while in this British-Israel case.

Let us consider certain facts. There is the fact of the Bible itself. And what an astonishing fact it is. Scorned, attacked, metaphorically torn to pieces by professed scholars, it yet stands supreme, after the worst efforts of two thousand years to destroy it. It is still the "best-seller," and its message may be read equally well by the Western Highlander of China and West Highlander of Scotland ; by the Korean and the South American Indian.

Thanks to the marvellous work of the British and Foreign, and kindred Bible Societies, the Bible is available for every single one of the main races and languages of the wide world.*

The Bible is a great and glorious fact.

Second, this Bible is divisible into two parts : the Old Testament and the New Testament. And it is a fact that the whole of the Old Testament was completed, even if one accepts the dates of the most modern of modern critics, at least two hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

It is also a fact that the New Testament was written twenty years at least after this same Jesus had ascended into heaven. If one were to accept some critical conclusions of modern scholars one would say that for thirty years after

* The 1931 Report gives over 900 as the number of languages into which the Scriptures have been translated.

Christ's departure there was no single chapter or book of the New Testament in existence.

Therefore it follows, as an utterly indisputable fact, that whenever Jesus Christ, Peter, John, James, Paul, Stephen, refer to the Scriptures, they mean the Old Testament Scriptures and those only. Paul, writing to Timothy, says that the Scriptures are able to make him wise unto salvation.

However astounding it may appear to the present reader, who probably has thought of salvation only as a New Testament subject, it is the Old Testament Scriptures to which Paul referred ; and therefore, in Paul's view, the Old Testament is able to shew the way of salvation to an enquirer.

Another fact is this, that it is quite impossible to understand the New Testament unless the Old Testament is known.

This statement will be immediately disputed by many people, and doubtless the average clergyman would laugh at it. None the less it is true, and two minutes' thinking will prove its truth.

There are 323 direct references to the Old Testament in the four gospels. There are 125 direct references to the Old Testament in the Book of Acts ; an astonishing fact when one remembers that a very large section of the book is a record of Paul's journeys. Altogether there are over 920 quotations from, or references to, the Old Testament in the New.

The very first verse in the New Testament throws you back upon the Old.

How then can you possibly escape from the fact I have stated ?

You must know the Old Testament, if you are to understand the New. Does not our Lord Himself declare that belief in the writings of Moses is essential to belief in Him ? And how can there be belief in the writings of Moses, if they be not read and understood ?

Very well, then, the value and importance of the Old

Testament Scriptures must be admitted by every intelligent reader of the New Testament.

So we advance to our next fact.

In the Old Testament there is detailed for us God's call to Abraham, and the subsequent promises of God in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Now, you may refuse to believe in this call, if you desire to be cantankerous. You may declare as vehemently as you like that God never made any promise to Abraham. You may descend to the use of slang, and speak of the Covenant promises as "bunkum." Let it be so, yet you cannot deny the fact that the promises and Covenant are plainly set out in Genesis. A child in the first standard of an elementary school can read them.

Nor can you deny that these Covenant promises to Abraham are quoted in the New Testament and definitely used as the foundation upon which certain Christian doctrines are built.

It will next be recognised as a fact that these Covenant promises are passed on to Isaac, Jacob, and Ephraim, to the exclusion of Ishmael, Esau, and Reuben. I need not here detail all the facts of the case. They are stated in plain language, easy to be understood, and an elementary school child can read them.

Let us pass on to one of the vital facts upon which we base our British-Israel case. It is a fact that the Bible distinguishes between Israel and Judah. I am fully aware that every opponent of British-Israel identity either flatly denies this or passes it over as of no moment. But their denial simply amounts to a blank refusal to accept plain statements. It is not the slightest use an opponent saying that there is no difference between Israel and Judah. An elementary school child can read the Bible and note the difference. He can notice that the phrase "all Israel" is used on occasions when Judah is definitely excluded. We may read, for example, of David being made king over Judah, whilst "all Israel" followed Ishbosheth. We can read also of "all Israel" coming to David to make him king; and

when he is thus accepted David becomes ruler of "all Israel" and Judah.

It is no use producing texts like 2 Chron. xi, 16 or 2 Chron. xv, 9, and pretending that these texts prove that Israel became absorbed into Judah. This is an argument frequently advanced, and it will not bear investigation. Why not ? Because, no matter how many individuals from the Ten Tribes joined the House of Judah, the kingdom of Israel continued.

Indeed, it was *after* the events recorded in 2 Chron. xv, that Israel attained to her greatest power under Jehu, and was also very prosperous under the second Jeroboam.

Further, the prophets, writing *after* the carrying of Israel into captivity—some of them writing after the return of the Jews to Palestine—distinguish between the two, and make different promises to each. They refer to *two* women, *two* branches, *two* families, in speaking of Israel and Judah.

These statements are facts, clearly declared in the Bible. To deny them is to demonstrate either sheer unbelief or sheer stupidity. Let me repeat, even at the risk of boring you, that a child in an elementary school can read these statements and can appreciate these facts.

And now another important Bible fact. Whilst from their captivity in Babylon some of the Jews returned ; from their captivity in Media, Israel did *not* return. No matter how keenly our opponents contend that "all Israel" came back to Palestine, their statement is utterly without foundation.

I have challenged my opponents time and time again to give me scriptural proof of their contention. I have even offered a reward to anyone who can find me the Bible statement that Ephraim, Manasseh, Dan, and the rest of the Ten Tribes returned with Ezra and Nehemiah. But their proof is never forthcoming, and the reward is never claimed. Then why cannot our opponents be honest, and frankly admit that they have no proof ?

The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah speak of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, and they never say a word about the return of the Ten Tribes.

“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear ; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child : for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations : spare not : lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall possess the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed ; neither be thou confounded ; for thou shalt not be put to shame ; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and the reproach of thy widowhood shalt thou remember no more.

“For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name ; and the Holy One of Israel is thy redeemer ; the God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even a wife of youth, when she is cast off, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In overflowing wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.”

“He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath ransomed Jacob, and redeemed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.”

“But fear not thou, O Jacob my Servant, neither be thou dismayed, O Israel : for, lo, I will save thee from far, and thy seed from the land of their captivity ; and Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Fear not thou, O Jacob My servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee, for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee : but I will correct thee with judgment, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished.”

“If My covenant of day and night stand not, if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth ; then will I also cast away the seed of Jacob and of David My servant,

so that I will not take of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; for I will cause their captivity to return, and will have mercy on them."

Here are a few promises to Israel, taken almost at random from two Old Testament prophets. They are messages to thrill, even though they may not convince, one who is a sceptic about inspiration.

Where in all literature will you find the like ?

And there are other passages in the same prophets, many others, that might have been selected with equal, if not greater, effect.

But what will you make of them ? That is the question that I want to ask and answer. What will you make of these promises ?

There are, it seems to me, four possible answers that can be given.

One. That these promises are flights of fancy, poetic raptures, from the pens of sincere but mistaken patriots.

Two. That they give us messages from God, through His inspired prophets, to tell us of the glory of the Church.

Three. That their message is one for the Jews, the remnant of Israel, and gives us a vision of the portion of Judah in the days to come.

Four. That these, and the similar promises, form a message to Israel, the nation, now known as Britain.

One can put these answers in another way.

One. That the promises never will be fulfilled.

Two. That they are fulfilled in the Church.

Three. That they will be fulfilled upon the Jews.

Four. That they are in process of fulfilment upon the British race.

Shall we examine each answer to see what it is really worth ?

The first answer, though it must appear to some possible only for an atheist or agnostic, is, as a matter of fact, the answer that is quite commonly given by theological scholars and Christian teachers. They believe that prophecy means, not foretelling, but only forth-telling ; and, consequently,

those who declared these messages were doing no more than preach sermons to their immediate hearers. Theirs was a message for their own day only, and however much they may have *hoped* that Israel would hearken to them and to some extent justify their visions, they could not, and did not, foretell any future state or development for Israel.

Now, what kind of an answer is this ? It is an answer that the Scripture itself refutes. Not only do the prophets claim to speak for God—the expression, “Thus saith the Lord,” comes *over a thousand times* in the prophets—but many of those prophesies are quoted in the New Testament, and used in a way that proves that the New Testament writers accepted the Old Testament writers as fore-tellers, far more than as forth-tellers. Forty-five times in the Gospel story are the prophetic statements concerning Christ quoted, in order that the evangelists may prove that Jesus of Nazareth is Christ.

There can be no question that the New Testament writers accepted the prophets *as* prophets, and therefore the answer of the “Modernist” really involves unbelief in the New Testament, even to the extent of unbelief in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Again, it has been declared that, “Many of the Old Testament prophecies have never been fulfilled, and circumstances have so altered that they never will be fulfilled.”

This view of the matter involves unbelief, equally with that of the “Modernist,” for it suggests that, however correct the prophets were in their Messianic visions, they have proved incorrect in their visions of Israel’s future.

But surely God’s inspiration of His messages cannot be both accurate and inaccurate ? It is the same God speaking through the same prophets. Is it then really common sense to say : “This is reliable, but that is unreliable” ? Isaiah writes of the Servant Messiah and of the Servant Nation. Was he inspired when he prophesied about the first, and merely indulging in poetic flights of fancy when he prophesied about the second ? Shall one be fulfilled and not the other ?

It is this method of dealing with Scriptures that, it seems to me, simply paves the way for atheism or drives men, as it did me, along the road to agnosticism. It simply is not common sense. Moreover, I notice that writers and teachers who deny the value of the national prophecies, or who question the statements of the Scripture, never advance any real and valid argument. The best they can say is : "This is the accepted opinion of scholarship." And before reaching that dictum, they are careful to rule out from the ranks of "scholarship" anyone who may disagree with them.

Their position, therefore, is hopelessly unjust and unreasonable.

Consequently we may set aside the first answer to our question as being quite unworthy of reasonable men, and much more unworthy of Christians.

Nor will the second answer bear a close inspection. It is not an uncommon thing to find "headings" to the chapters in some editions of the Bible, applying to the Church, promises and prophecies that were made to Israel.

Much has been written in eulogy of the Church, and the reader is constantly referred to the prophets for confirmation of the glorious visions of the writers.

But how can one reasonably apply to the Church the prophetic messages concerning Israel? Many of them simply will not fit.

"In overflowing wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment."

How can that be applied to the Church? "I will gather them out of all countries whither I have scattered them." How utterly unlike anything connected with the Church?

Moreover, if prophecy means the Church when it speaks of Israel, what does it mean when it speaks of Judah?

Surely, if "Judah" be taken in its ordinary sense, logic demands that "Israel" be also taken to mean neither more nor less than Israel?

To take the Israel promises for the Church is to force upon them an unnatural meaning, and is, equally with the views of modernism, to drive enquirers along the road of agnosticism.

What now shall we say concerning the third answer ?

This answer is the one most commonly given by keen and devout evangelicals. They believe, they say, in taking the Scriptures as literally as possible. How then can they declare that Israel and Judah are one and the same people ? Yet they definitely contend for this identity, and it is a distressing feature of their case that those who hold this identity theory are usually the most bitter, and, alas, the most abusive of opponents of British-Israel teaching. Their bitterness indeed leads them into statements so contrary to the Scriptures that one is left amazed.

Here are three statements, taken from three booklets written by men who are really very sincere and devout evangelicals, against British-Israel teaching :

(1) There is no distinction between Israel and Judah, and the Bible never makes one.

(2) Not only did the Ten Tribes never go into captivity, but the Scriptures never say they did.

(3) There is no such thing as national redemption ever taught in the Scriptures.

Those statements have actually been put down in black and white by men who claim to know and believe the Bible !

And a child in an elementary school could show the error in them.

It is true, of course, that chapters like 2 Chron. xi and xv mention an inflow of Israel into Judah, but at the very most this inflow was partial and temporary. And the prophets—some of them writing after Judah's return from Babylon—persist in speaking of Israel and Judah as two women, two sticks, two branches, two families. Whilst surely the statement of Zech. xi, 14, is sufficiently final to silence any opponent ?

I fancy I should be correct if I were to say that the students who give the second answer to our question, and who make Israel to mean the Church, have really a far better case than those who give the third answer, and seek

to make Israel into Judah, or Jews. I would go so far as to say that it is much better to "spiritualise" Israel, and get some sort of a message out of the prophets, than to take Israel as Judah, and so flatly contradict the prophets.

But for the sake of argument let us presume that the third answer has something in it, and that the prophecies made to Israel are to be fulfilled upon the Jews in the future. What will that answer mean in hard, logical fact.

These promises are to be fulfilled in the "latter days."

That is not my view, nor any theological view ; it is the frequent Bible statement. "In the latter days it shall come to pass." Now, the "latter" or "last" days are *before* the Return of the Lord ; *Before !*

Therefore it follows as clearly as possible, that if this third answer is the correct answer, if Israel and Judah are comprehended in "the Jews," then the Jews are to become a nation and a company of nations ; they are to obtain the heritage of the nations (Ps. cxi) ; they are to become possessors of the desolate places of the earth, develop them and make them fruitful ; they are to fulfill the "fast that God has chosen," in causing slavery and oppression to cease, and in setting on foot philanthropic reforms ; they are to spread abroad the Scriptures of Truth, and bear witness to God in the face of Jesus Christ. In short, the Jews are to carry out the hundred and one tasks allotted to Israel "in the latter days."

And there are two fairly obvious difficulties in the way.

First, that the Jews will find that much of the work has already been done by another people—the British.

Second, that Britain already occupies the position promised to Israel.

Now it is no use arguing the point ; our very opponents admit it.

Why, most of them are closely identified with "Mission to the Jews," and their life is largely spent in seeking to convert the Jews. Yes, British people, British Christians, are actually engaged in preparing the Jews for the Lord's

Return. And therefore our opponents contradict their own words by their own actions and admissions.

Britain has already done much of the supposed "Jewish" work, and is busy doing more of it.

If, then, the third answer is Scriptural and correct, we British must give way to the Jews. Our position in the world must go. The work we have already done must be undone. The world must return to the position and condition which obtained in A.D. 1750, and then the Jews, in "the latter days" must begin the task again.

A cheerful prospect, a cheerful prospect indeed. But a prospect that logically follows, if once the premises be admitted.

Will the advocates of this third answer allow the conclusion. Will they allow the further logical conclusion that the Return of the Lord is thereby indefinitely postponed? They cannot. It is unthinkable, surely? Can anyone really believe that Britain and Britain's work must go, must be all undone, in order that room and opportunity may be given to the Jews? And if one can believe it, must not that one admit that such a development must take generations to work out?

Then such a one must also admit that the Lord's Return is postponed for generations, and the hope of the world indefinitely delayed.

But here comes the strangeness of the matter. These very people who can bring themselves to believe in Israel's absorption by Judah; to believe that Israel's portion has become that of the Jews; that the Jews are to have all the promises fulfilled upon them in the latter days; these are the very people who teach and preach, in season and out of season, with deep zeal and passionate enthusiasm, with commendable sincerity, the *nearness* of the Return.

In one or other of their doctrines they must be wrong. If they are right in this their third answer, they are wrong in teaching the approach of the Advent. If they are correct, as I am confident they are, in declaring that "The Day is at hand," that the Advent may be expected within a few

years, then they must be wrong in declaring that "all these promises are going to be fulfilled upon the Jews in the future."

Therefore we are driven back, by the force of Scripture, by the force of logic, by the force of our own best hope for the world, upon the fourth answer, that these promises are fulfilled or are in process of fulfilment upon the British people.

And therefore we are able to say with conviction indeed :

"The night is far spent, the Day is at hand." "For He cometh to judge the earth ; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity."

CHAPTER III

THE COVENANTS OF THE BIBLE

THERE are two great divisions in the Bible—the Old and New Testaments.

Now, this word Testament could equally well be translated Covenant, and we might speak of these two divisions as the Old and New Covenants. You will find by a reference to Heb. vii, 22, for example, that the Greek word, *diatheke*, is translated Testament in the Authorised Version, and Covenant in the Revised Version.

It may be well worth while, then, at the very outset, to define this word Covenant or Testament, for I find that there is a certain misapprehension about the word Covenant.

So many people think of a Covenant as a bargain or agreement between two persons ; and that, of course, is the dictionary definition. But a *Testament*, according to the dictionary, is a solemn declaration of a person's will or purpose. In a Testament, any idea of a bargain is excluded. How then does it come about that in the Bible the two words are, on occasions, interchangeable ?

I ask that question for a very excellent reason.

I have been challenged for using the term “unconditional Covenant,” and for declaring that some of the Bible Covenants *are* unconditional. The dictionary definition of the word is hurled at me with the shout of triumph, and the challenge flung at me that there is no such thing as an unconditional Covenant. “Stay awhile, my friend,” I say, “and your shout of triumph will die away into silence. Never mind the dictionary ; go to the Bible and you will find that sometimes Covenant and Testament are used with one and the same meaning. Some of the Bible Covenants are Testaments. That is to say, they are declarations of

God's will, and because they are declarations of God's will, conditions are excluded, and you therefore get an unconditional Covenant."

If you argue further and declare that this transposition of words is a careless use of language, and that no one has any right to make these two words interchangeable, I would simply answer that our Bible translators did so make them interchangeable, and if you wish to indite their use of English, it is up to you to write better English. I do not at all envy you your task.

Moreover, I would like you to recall to your memory the fact that in the early seventeenth century some good Scottish folk took unto themselves the title Covenanters; and the Scottish National Covenant of 1638 was by no means a bargain, but a declaration of a people's purpose.

With this point about the use of the words made clear, I hope, let us go back to the idea of the Old and New Covenants, or Old and New Testaments.

Now, though we speak of them as Old and New, there is a real sense in which both are Old, for the New Covenant in Christ Jesus was ordained of God from everlasting. It is therefore New only in the fact that it was revealed to Israel at a later point of time in history than the older revelation.

Again, though we speak of the Old and New as if there were but two, there are actually eight different Covenants made and described in the Bible.

And yet another point that I would like to make here. There is a sense in which both Old and New Covenants are New.

Many people to-day, and especially the clergy, speak of the Old Testament as if it were worn out, finished, dispensed with, and as if it were both wise and right to cast it on one side altogether.

Let me say that any attempt to cast aside the Old Testament, as one would discard a worn-out garment, is inevitably to bring disaster to the whole cause of Christ's Church in the world.

The Old and New Testaments are really indivisible ele-

ments of one Book, and form together one whole. The famous saying of Augustine, that the New is latent in the Old, and the Old patent in the New, is undeniably true, and may be illustrated by a simple story. A Chinaman, given a copy of the New, read it, studied it, and came back to the missionary with the request, "May I have the first volume?"

And that the Bible is one Book is confirmed beyond all power of argument or criticism to disprove by the study of its eight Covenants. These Covenants are :

1. The Covenant made with Adam in Eden.
2. The Covenant made with Adam after the Fall.
3. The Covenant made with Noah after the Flood.
4. The Abrahamic Covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
5. The Mosaic Covenant declared at Sinai.
6. The Covenant made with Israel when about to enter Palestine.
7. The Davidic Covenant setting forth God's promises to the House of David.
8. The New Covenant in Christ Jesus.

What I desire to do in this chapter is to describe each of these eight Covenants in the order in which they come, and thereby give, as clearly as I can, a summary of the whole teaching and purpose of the Bible.

Paul, gathering together some of his converts on his last journey to Jerusalem, says to them, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." And if there is one claim more than another that I would glory to make to my Divine Master in the day of His reckoning it is the same, "That I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God." One of the saddest failures of the Church's ministers of many generations is just this, that they have confined their labours to but one part of the counsel of God. They have, for example, preached more or less faithfully the Gospel of Salvation. They have neglected to preach—many of them seem absolutely ignorant of it—the Gospel of the Kingdom. Yet both are set forth in the Bible, and set forth so clearly that one feels justified in saying that the failure to

know and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom is unpardonable. For in this latter is contained the full message of the coming reign of Christ, a message bulwarked by clearest references to the Throne of David and the Personal return.

Jacob, on his death-bed, settles the apportionment of the Promised Land amongst his sons without the slightest hesitation. His sons might have asked some very awkward questions about a land that had not provided much "rest" for their father, and they might have reminded him that the Canaanite was still in the land. But there is no doubt in Jacob's heart about God's promises, and no sign of doubt either in the hearts of his sons. Moreover, Joseph, who might have justly felt that Egypt held the best opportunities for his own two sons, did not hesitate to bring them to Jacob to be blessed, counting the Covenant Blessings of God infinitely greater riches than the education and advancements of Egypt.

What a contrast to our faith as Christians ! So little have we to offer. Content are we to offer invisible and spiritual blessings, spiritual consolation for wordly grief ; to point a man who has lost a fortune, or gone bankrupt, to some vague eternal inheritance, to some heaven which we cannot define ! Ah, Jacob had a better faith, and so should we if we taught and trusted the whole counsel of God. We should be able to offer what a man can grasp.

And the counsel of God is set down for us in the story of the eight Covenants.

Of the first three Covenants the Bible has actually very little to say. So far as their history and explanation are concerned, the first nine chapters of Genesis completes their account.

Yet it is not in any sense inferiority, or lack of importance, that makes for brevity in the description, for in fact it is in the first three Covenants that the conditions are marked out and the circumstances created that make the other five essential. Therefore a careful study of these three is necessary for the clear understanding of the Bible.

I am prepared to make this statement, and to stand by it,

that if these three Covenants, or any one of them, be removed from the Bible, or be deprived of their plain meaning, then the Bible, even the story of Jesus Christ, becomes unintelligible, losing its proper background and foundation.

First, then, we will see what the Bible tells us of the Covenant made with Adam in Eden.

There are clear indications in the Old Testament that the original creation of Almighty God suffered some disaster. We are not told in so many words what that disaster was, but we know that the face of the earth bears everywhere the marks of this disaster.

We are told in the Bible that sometime in the dateless past—"In the beginning"—God created the heavens and the earth. Then in Jer. iv, 23, and Isa. xxiv, 1, we are told that this original creation was visited with God's judgment. Says Jeremiah, in the Spirit, "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void"—just the very expression of Gen. i, 2—"and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly"—suggesting some tremendous cataclysm—"I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heaven were fled."

So, though we are not told exactly when or how the catastrophe came, the fact of it is clearly enough stated in the Bible. Moreover, there are not wanting hints regarding the cause for the fierce anger of God burning against His first creation. In Isa. xiv and Ezek. xxviii there are expressions which would appear to connect the upheaval with a downfall and judgment of angels, for the prophetic visions in these two chapters certainly go beyond the simple word.

Ezekiel writes, "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God ; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God. . . ." and there follows the description of the blasphemies and the condemnation of this personage.

Surely it is no stretching of the imagination to see here the prophet picturing Satan, the inspirer and unseen ruler

behind all such pomp and pride as that of ancient Tyre ? And Isaiah is even more definite : "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning ; for thou hast said in thine heart, 'I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven ; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High,' yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

So, I say, there is quite enough in Scripture to suggest both the fact, and the Satanic cause, of the disaster that befell the original creation.

Then, after God had restored order in those six days that we call the days of Creation, God made Adam, and set him in Eden, and made with him a Covenant.

This first Covenant, made in the time of man's innocency, made when man had been placed in a perfect environment, was, like nearly all the Covenants of the Bible, one with an absolutely simple test, the test of obedience to one Law. The condition of this first Covenant was quite plain and easy to understand. There was one "Thou shalt not."

Placed in Eden, under conditions in which the presence of Almighty God was easily recognised and felt, the man and the woman whom God had made were given the opportunity and the necessary powers for the replenishing of the earth, of making the land fruitful, and of having dominion over all the animal creation. But all was made dependent upon the one "Thou shalt not."

This Covenant was broken by the disobedience of the Fall. Adam and Eve failed to obey the one Law, failed under the test, and were driven from the Garden.

Yet God's mercy did not depart from them. The fallen man and woman were restored by God's grace to a condition of favour. They were no longer innocent, for conscience had been awakened, and they came therefore under the dispensation of that conscience under which God made with them a second Covenant. This second Covenant teaches us the conditions of the life of fallen humanity, the conditions, that is, that have governed the lives of all men since the Fall, under which therefore we live. These conditions re-

main till the Coming of the Lord restores all things created to their original virgin purity. This second Covenant was partly founded in a curse, for God's judgment came upon Adam for his sin, and the judgment comprehended the burden of labour—"in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"—the difficulty of labour—"thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee"—the sorrow of life—"in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life"—physical death—"dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." All these things, the fruit of the curse, are included in the judgment of God upon the Fall, yet how important it is to notice that even in such a Covenant, in such a statement of God's will and purpose, there is the clear promise of blessing and restoration. For you have, in the story of this second Covenant, the first promise of a Saviour, the first beginnings of God's work of redemption through the godly seed. It is this Covenant made with Adam when cast out of Eden that provides the first link in a chain that runs unbroken throughout the whole Bible ; that chain of men, chosen and called out by God, who should labour for God in righteousness, and who should be fellow-workers with God to restore God's dominion over the earth.

And we are able to follow the chain of that godly seed, first through Seth, given to Eve to take the place of righteous Abel ; then on through Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, right down to the Lord Jesus, Who, the Christ, the Eternal Son of God, Himself God, was yet born of human flesh in the line of these men.

The third Covenant was that made with Noah.

From the time of the Fall to the judgment of the Flood, man was left to the guidance of his own conscience, but, failing to obey the dictates of his conscience, "changing the truth of God for a lie," "worshipping the creature rather than the Creator," and "refusing to have God in his knowledge," man incurred the wrath of God, and the Flood came as a judgment.

But Noah, who, though not altogether faultless, was yet a believer and a preacher of righteousness, was saved, and

God entered into a Covenant with him, the details of which we may read in Gen. ix.

The distinctive characteristic of this third Covenant is that man was made responsible to rule the earth, and capital punishment, the strongest form which human government can take, was given Divine authority.

God now put the fear of man into creation, and promised that there should no more come any judgment upon the earth like the judgment of the Flood. He promised also that seed-time and harvest should continue to give their blessings so long as the earth remains. Finally, to crown the blessing of this Covenant, the godly line of saints is renewed through Shem.

These are the first three Covenants of the Bible, and contained in them are some scientific facts of tremendous importance. And I say "scientific facts" for this reason : there are many learned men who contend that science is gravely at variance with the teaching of Genesis.

There are three claims made by these intellectuals, each of which combats some definite teaching in each of these Covenants. So I would claim that these three Covenants declare to us the truth, *the facts*, as against the theoretical fancies of the so-called "scientist."

(1) *First*, that man was created. He was not evolved.

The philosophic theory of evolution, generally accepted to-day and *called* scientific, is not true. I am afraid that most of the people who accept the theory do so because they wish to be thought up-to-date. If they realised the implications of evolution they would be less ready to accept it.

I hold fast to the Bible statement, *first*, because the gulf between the lowest type of man and the highest type of animal is enormous, in that even the lowest type of man possesses a reasoning mind, and neither science nor discovery has done anything whatever to bridge that gulf. Moreover, to throw on one side the Bible statement of Creation on the ground that discovery may, some day, bridge the gulf is anything but scientific. It is a wild, unscientific leap into the dark. It is really amazing how men,

seemingly in all else quite sober-minded, will grasp at the merest shadow of a straw if thereby they may "prove" Scripture to be wrong; the "proof," when examined, being found to be no more than suppositions based on theoretical conjectures.

Second, because man is essentially religious by nature. No man is an atheist by nature. Whilst no animal has the faintest trace, or the slightest possibility of expression, of the consciousness of God.

Third, it is noteworthy that in every point at which we can test the Bible narrative, and especially in the record of its prophecy, we find it absolutely correct.

Fourth, the theory of evolution runs directly counter to every experience of the human race. Especially is this noticeable in the history of religion, for there is no religion, nor philosophy, nor moral law, not even Christianity, that has not departed from its virgin purity and ideals. The germs of the disease of decay and deterioration infect all things human.

Fifth, the only logical consequence of "evolution" is "materialism."

There is, of course, such a thing as "development." The very revelation of God is a progressive revelation. But evolution and development are two fundamentally different things. Evolution, even if it allows room for a "god"—*and properly speaking it does not*—lays down the law for such a god. Development watches and follows the mind of God. Evolution finds no place for miracle, development does. Evolution has no knowledge of either the Virgin Birth or the Atonement—two utterly fundamental truths of the Christian; so fundamental that no man has the least right to the name of "Christian" who does not accept them as true. Development acknowledges both.

(2) *The second* fact that emerges from a study of the first three Covenants is that man "fell." And in no other way is it possible to account for the sin and sorrow in the world.

If "evolution" were true, the 6,000 years of known historic record should show a marked improvement in the conditions

of human nature and character, whereas, on the contrary, the world of humanity has spent all that she had on many physicians and is nothing bettered, but rather made worse.

Let not the twentieth century, with its slums, its disease, its crass ignorance and superstition, under the very shadow of its Universities, with its experiences of the last war, boast itself against the "uncivilised centuries" of the ancients. Rather let it humble itself, and admit in honesty that the healing Hand of the Great Physician is more needed to-day than ever before.

(3) The third Bible fact is the judgment of the Flood, which is the one outstanding event that impressed itself indelibly on the mind of the ancient world.

Now I have said that a study of these three Covenants with their related facts is necessary for the understanding of the Bible. And this is true. Leave out the teaching of these Covenants, and the rest of the Bible becomes unintelligible. Deny, for example, the "Fall," and how shall the "Atonement" be explained in Bible terms? The modernist view is that we are saved, not by the Blood of Jesus Christ, but by copying His example. "We no longer believe in the Atonement, so far as it presupposes a 'Fall.' " But the Bible is filled with teaching about the Atonement. From one end to the other, in prophecy, in ceremony, in historic fact, we are able to trace "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

If, then, one denies the Fall, one has also to deny the greatest messages and teachings of the Bible, and to scorn the greatest symbol of God's love for His creation.

Let us rest quite assured, then, that in these three Covenants we have a narrative truly scientific—scientific because it is demonstrable, and demonstrated, and truly inspired.

We come now, in the Bible record, to the story of the fourth Covenant—that made with Abraham, and renewed with Isaac and Jacob, and then passed on to Ephraim. Ephraim, let us note, not Judah.

In many senses this Covenant is the most important of all, because it forms the prophetic summary, given from

sarily an eternal election. That is why we are adjured to do our diligence to make our calling and election sure.

But with the other election of this Covenant, the election of Israel, there is something quite different.

This election is not conditional. It is permanent, and cannot be broken. When God made this Covenant with Abraham He laid down no condition whatever. It was made because Abraham already believed. It followed faith, and so quite obviously was not dependent upon faith. The blessings were not of reward, nor of merit, but of Covenant. "I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham."

If, then, any professing Christian declares or teaches that this Covenant has lapsed or failed so far as Israel is concerned, because of Israel's sins, he is not merely showing his ignorance both of Scripture and of history, but he is declaring God's oath to be null and void, thereby making God a liar.

So, let me emphasise that the blessings promised to Abraham and to his seed depend, not on Israel's faith, but on God's oath. "I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for Mine Holy Name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen whither ye went."

The election of grace is open to all men—"men of every tribe and nation"; there are no restrictions of age or sex, or social conditions, or race; it is absolutely a personal matter between a man and his Maker.

The election of the nation, on the other hand, is limited and narrow; it applies to one people and to one people only, to Israel, the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob.

Those words, "through Isaac and Jacob," are important, for though the Turks, Edomites, and the Arabs, Ishmaelites, are children of Abraham, they are not God's chosen. Further, be it noted, when Jacob died, he passed his name, with the Covenant blessings connected with it, to Ephraim. Therefore, whilst the Jews, the children of Judah, are inheritors, as Israelites, of the Covenant blessings, they are not the chief inheritors. The birthright is not Judah's, it is Ephraim's, and therefore this election of the nation affects

Ephraim first and foremost. Yet once again : in this election of the nation, there is no direct word of the grace of salvation ; it is the choosing of a special nation for the service of Almighty God. "Ye shall be unto Me a Kingdom of priests and an holy nation."

So you read in this fourth Covenant the wonderful story of the choosing out by God of a certain people who should serve God, and establish righteousness, peace and justice in the world ; who should proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world ; who should be a peculiar people to show forth God's praise in the earth.

And so God's purposes, begun in the first three Covenants, take a clear-cut line in this fourth Covenant which, whilst it follows directly on from the other three, yet marks a new era in the story of mankind.

Now I know that there are plenty of people who will want to dispute what I have said about the election of the nation in this Covenant, but here it is in the Bible, and whether we like it or not, it is part and parcel of the Bible's plain teaching that God has made choice of a certain people, given them privileges and blessings not granted to the other nations. Moreover, Paul, correctly surmising that some who promise to believe in the God of Truth, and to preach His word, would wish to argue that the New Testament changes this Old Testament idea for a better and truer one, has declared, not only that the Law did not affect the Covenant made with Abraham, but that the calling and gifts of God are without repentance, that God does not change His mind, nor go back upon His sworn word. God made His Covenant with Abraham, and it has held good all down the ages, and will always hold good.

It is at this point that the truth and value of British-Israel Identity enters, for the evidence that God has kept His oath is in the existence of Israel as a nation and company of nations at the present time. Starting with Gen. xii, you will find a series of marks and characteristics that were to be possessed by Israel, the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and they were to possess these marks most

especially in the "latter days." Such marks include : great population ; possession of colonies ; a monarchy ; having a descendant of David reigning ; abundance of mineral wealth ; a national heraldry of the Lion and the Unicorn ; making the desolate heritages of the earth fruitful ; keeping God's holy day. Altogether there are about sixty defined marks of Israel in the Law and the Prophets. As those characteristics are all found in the British race, and in no other, and as it was foretold that Israel was to be known by another name, and to be blind to her origin and destiny, we are fully justified in claiming that Britain is the living witness to the surety of this fourth Covenant, for it is quite unthinkable that the God of Truth should give to Britain the inalienable privileges and powers of Israel if Britain be not Israel, but some purely Gentile people.

I will not now go further into detail in the matter of British-Israel Identity, but will pass on to the description of the fifth Covenant, leaving to your private study the interesting task of reading up the Israel marks, as given in the Bible, and of seeing for yourself their application to the British. The fifth Covenant, made with Israel at Sinai, is the one generally known as the Old Covenant, and it is the one that has given its name to the Old Testament.

The mediator of this Covenant was Moses, who was called to that office by God, and who was given a direct revelation of the Personality of God.

This Covenant is one with definite conditions laid down, and with definite penalties attaching to any failure to satisfy those conditions.

It was because Israel failed to keep the Law of this Covenant and failed to live up to the standards and requirements of the Law, that she fell under God's ban and was driven into exile. It is not necessary to say much about this Covenant, mainly because its details are fairly well known to most Christians and Bible students, but certain points must be noted.

First, that in the history of this Covenant there is most clearly marked the distinction between Israel and Judah. I

am aware that most commentators ignore this fact, or else set it aside as of little moment ; but what the Scriptures make so much of, and are so careful to emphasise, no man, least of all a preacher and a teacher of the Bible, has any right to belittle. If it was important enough for the inspired historian and prophet to notice, it is important enough for the careful attention even of a twentieth-century intellectual.

Second, this Covenant was “added on” to the Abrahamic Covenant. That is Paul’s expression. It was an addition. Moreover, Paul teaches most definitely that the Mosaic Covenant does not supply any condition accidentally omitted from the Abrahamic Covenant ; and that it had nothing whatever to do with the Abrahamic Covenant. He tells us that God gave His Covenant to Abraham by promise, and he goes on to say that the Mosaic, coming 430 years after, could not and did not make the Abrahamic Covenant of none effect. If, then, men would but read what Paul says, they would not talk so glibly of “the transference to the Church of the Israel blessings, through the breaking of the Covenant conditions by Israel.” Such a statement as that of the author of “The Way of Peace”—“For the now rejected Chosen People God substituted His Chosen Church”—is one that is made in complete ignorance of the Word of God.

The truth is that Israel, at Sinai, desired Moses as a mediator, desired a Law, even as in later years they desired a King. They thought it would be easier to follow out the injunctions of a Law than to live under grace, as their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, had lived. But the Law proved their undoing, for they failed to obey its conditions, and so became subject to its penalties. They found that the Law worketh wrath. Let it be noted here, lest any careless answer be given about Israel’s subjection to the penalties through sin, that there is a limit set to the working of the penalties. The Bible does not teach that Israel, having broken the Law, is *for ever* under its wrath, but that the punishment was for a set time, for “seven times.” And

this "seven times" is not a theological fancy but a Bible fact.

Again, it is the detailed ritual of this Law, the Tabernacle, with its prophetic types and ceremonies and sacrifices, that is done away in Christ Jesus. It had served its purpose in preparing the way for Christ. It was a shadow of good things to come. It was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. When, then, the adversaries of British-Israel Identity teaching quote the conditions of this Mosaic Covenant, and refer to Israel's failure to keep those conditions, and their consequent punishment as a reason for rejecting British-Israel they are altogether beside the mark. They are misquoting and misapplying Scripture.

The Bible facts stand out clearly enough, and we may observe some of them as we follow very briefly the story of the sixth, or Palestinian Covenant. It is this one which gives us the conditions under which Israel entered Palestine, the portion of the Promised Land that was to be their immediate home. Be it remembered that Palestine is not the whole of the Promised Land, but only a very small portion of it.

Now, Palestine, in the terms of this Covenant, was to be held by Israel only whilst they were obedient to the Law.

There are three facts which stand out quite plainly in the Scriptures. First, that Israel did not take possession of this land under the Abrahamic Covenant. If they had done so, there would have been no need for the Palestinian Covenant at all. Second, that Israel never possessed the whole, nor anything like the whole of the Promised Land, in the time of her first residence. Though it is both interesting and instructive to notice that Britain either possesses or holds the mandate for the whole of it to-day, and rules this portion of her newly-acquired territory from Jerusalem, the ancient capital of Israel. Third, that Israel, the Ten Tribes first, and Judah later, lost her hold upon Palestine for her disobedience.

Israel, the Northern Kingdom, was entirely removed from Palestine about 721 B.C. by the Assyrians, and the land

of her captivity was the country of the Medes, by the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. And Israel did not return to Palestine. Some 130 years after, Judah, the Southern Kingdom, was partially removed to Babylon, from which place a portion of the captives returned after seventy years.

These facts are of the utmost importance. It is neither Scriptural nor historical to speak of the return after the seventy years as if all the twelve tribes returned. There may have been, and probably were, representatives of all the tribes in the remnant that returned, but not even all Judah came back, as the canonical histories of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther definitely show, and as do other histories, such as Esdras and Josephus.

Now, just as when Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, God tempered judgment with the mercy of a promised redemption, so, too, in this Palestinian Covenant, God made the promise of redemption, assuring Israel over and over again in the prophets that the Covenant with Abraham should never fail. Hence you find those prophets, especially Isaiah and Hosea, definitely looking forward to abundant blessing upon Israel: blessing that is quite distinct from anything that is promised to Judah. Indeed, sometimes, whilst a blessing is pronounced upon Israel, a curse is pronounced upon Judah. You will find, for example, Israel compared to a vessel remoulded in the hands of the potter, whilst Judah is a vessel that is broken in pieces.

Whilst there are promises which detail for the divorced and desolate wife, Israel, blessings of restoration and fruitfulness, they were not to be the portion of the married wife, Judah. So we come down to the consideration of the Seventh Covenant, that made with David, after Israel and Judah had, under him, found rest in Palestine, and were established for the first time as one Kingdom.

In this Covenant, God made promise to David of a throne that should remain for ever, and this Covenant is an unconditional one, like that made with Abraham.

The family of David has often failed—even Solomon, wise as he was, failed to keep the unity of the Kingdom, and in

the days of his son, the old division re-appeared ; and we read in the Bible how the House of David sinned against God and fell into condemnation. But still the promise stands. Confirmed to David by the oath of the Covenant-keeping Jehovah, the Throne and the Kingdom remain unto this day.

And it is upon this Covenant that the glorious Kingdom of Christ is founded ; for when the Lord Jesus comes again, He comes to *take* the Throne of David ; not to establish, but to take, and to reign here upon earth.

Let me say here, that if the Coming Again of Jesus be only a "spiritual" coming into the hearts of men, as is so often contended to-day, then there is neither rhyme nor reason in this Davidic Covenant, nor any sense in the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come on earth."

And this remark brings me right up to the eighth Covenant—that called the New Covenant in Christ Jesus.

This is the Covenant that takes the place of the Mosaic Covenant, and gives fulfilment to all the others.

For Christ is the Second Adam, coming to restore to earth the virgin purity of Eden. He is the Seed of the woman, Who has bruised the serpent's head, and taken away the sting of death and sin, paying the penalty in the bruising of His heel. He is the chiefest of the godly seed of Shem. He is the One Seed of Abraham through Whom all spiritual and material blessings come to Israel and the world. He lived sinlessly under the Mosaic Law, and bore its curse for us. It is in Christ Jesus that Israel has regained possession of the Holy Land, and will retain her possession of the Promised Land. And He is the Son of David destined to reign over a re-united Israel and Judah.

Part of this Covenant in Christ has already been fulfilled. Salvation has been wrought for mankind, and is offered to men through faith in the Blood shed. A great part, too, of the blessings made to Israel has received completion.

But part of it has yet to be fulfilled ; we wait the Coming of the King.

And this part of the New Covenant that still waits for

completion, is, like the Covenants made with Abraham and David, absolutely without any condition whatever attached.

When God spoke to Israel through Moses, He said, "If ye will obey My voice." "If ye will . . . If ye will not."

But when He speaks to Israel in the New Covenant, He says, "I will." There is no "if" about it. "I will put My law into their hearts." "They *shall* be My people, and I *will* be their God."

And we have most excellent reason to be devoutly thankful that this Covenant is unconditional, for it is completed, the Bible tells us, when Jesus comes again.

Suppose God had laid down a condition, "If ye will obey My voice," how long should the world have to wait for the peace and righteousness which every sane person longs for and which are to be established when the Lord returns?

For nineteen centuries there have been faithful preachers of the Word. Even in the saddest years of the Church's history there has been some Elijah to plead the cause of God. But whilst the torch of truth has always been burning, and held aloft by someone, is it not true to say that the history of these years has been one, on the whole, of failure, of false teaching, of worldliness that never shows any signs of abating?

Those who talk so lightly of "winning the world for Christ," and of "the forward march of the Church," simply do not face the facts. Presuming that every single baptism in all the Churches means a genuine and lasting conversion, it is painfully obvious that the increase in numbers so made does not come within one-twentieth part of the increase of the world's population. And, as a matter of fact, most of the Churches have to record a slowly dwindling membership, and most of the Missionary Societies are face to face with the necessity of retrenchment. Is it not, therefore, more than a little absurd to talk about "winning the world for Christ," the more so when we consider the grievous divisions in the Church Visible?

When *will* man obey the voice of the Lord, and hearken to

the Law of God ? And can the preachers of the Gospel compel men to listen to their message and heed it ?

Experience, sad experience, written in blood and sorrow across the pages of history, tells us that if we have to wait for the fulfilling of the condition of obedience before the New Covenant is completed, then we might as well give up in utter despair, and leave the world to the dominion of the devil. But, thank God, there is no condition attached ; it is not "if ye will," but "I will," the definite word of the Covenant-keeping Jehovah.

Therefore, you and I, having seen so great a part of God's purposes completed, and promises fulfilled, may well look forward with devout and abundant assurance for the Return of the Lord, and the completion of the Covenant. Soon, very soon, comes the day, foreseen so clearly in the prophecies, when there shall be permanently established the peace, purity, righteousness and blessing that God has ordained for His earth.

CHAPTER IV

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

AFTER the general outline of all the Covenants of the Bible just given we shall do well to examine the Abrahamic Covenant in more detail.

The matter with which we are vitally concerned is this :
“What saith the Scripture ?”

I do not propose to argue any point or question of inspiration, for I am sure that any such question as may be raised will be sufficiently answered by the statement of the case I wish to set out. It is enough for my case that we should just study the Abrahamic Covenant and see exactly what the Bible says on the matter.

No question of interpretation is involved. We simply have to read the Scripture statements as they stand—just as a child would read them. Any disputing is set aside at once, because the words I shall quote to you are there in the Scriptures, and any elementary school child could read them.

“Now the Lord said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will show thee : And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and be thou a blessing : And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse : and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

There is a clear statement which may be clearly understood by any man in possession of his faculties.

You may tell me, if you wish, that God never said any such thing ; or that Abram never existed ; or that the whole idea of a covenant between God and man is absurd on the face of it. You may advance any such ideas that you

please. But you cannot deny that the words are here in Genesis xii.

“And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward : For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

“After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram : I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. . . . In that day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

“And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly . . . and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations . . . and I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee . . . and I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant . . . and I will give unto thee and thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings.

“Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.

“By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son : that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed My voice.”

Here are the promises which were made, according to the Bible, to Abraham. There is no mistaking the matter, is there ? There should be no confusion in any reader's mind, should there ? Very well, then, in exactly the same way, trace these Covenant promises through Isaac and Jacob.

“Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will

bless thee ; for unto thee and unto thy seed will I give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father ; and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My Charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.

“I am the God of Abraham thy father ; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and will multiply thy seed for My servant Abraham’s sake.

“I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac ; the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed ; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south ; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

“Thy name is Jacob ; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name ; and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty ; be fruitful and multiply ; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins ; and the land which I gave unto Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.”

Then notice how Ephraim is brought into the record.

“Let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac . . . and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.”

Reuben and Simeon were actually the eldest sons of Jacob, but here in Genesis xlviii, Ephraim and Manasseh are set first. It is no matter of an interpretation set upon the Bible words, but of their plain meaning. And so emphatically is this word of Jacob endorsed in the later Scriptures, that Ephraim is actually used as a name for Ten-Tribed Israel on fifty-three occasions.

The next point to observe is that the Abrahamic Covenant is made the basis of the Mosaic Covenant.

If you will take the trouble to read the early chapters of Exodus, in which you find the story of the call of God to

Moses, you will be able to notice how frequently the expression comes, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

The Scripture simply "rubs it in," if I may be allowed the slang.

These verses deal with an absolutely vital matter. For the common impression in people's minds, due to the persistent teaching of the "Church," is that the Mosaic Covenant is the all-important one in the Old Testament. Indeed, it is the Mosaic Covenant that is actually meant when the Old Covenant is mentioned. The proper title of the Old Testament is, "The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings." But so great a part has the Mosaic Covenant played in the story of Israel, and in the theology of the Church, that it has come to give its name to the first volume of the Bible, and the correct name has been completely forgotten. It is commonly supposed, then, that the Mosaic Covenant is the one and only Covenant of the Old Testament, and that this Mosaic Covenant was done away in Christ Jesus, and that therefore there is the end of it.

Reading what the Bible says, and noticing what God, according to Exodus, said to Moses, this common impression is completely swept aside, and shown to be wrong.

The Bible establishes the Abrahamic Covenant as the most important of the Old Testament, and the Mosaic Covenant rests upon the Abrahamic. Without the Abrahamic, the Mosaic would have no meaning at all. It was because God remembered His word and promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that He sent Moses to deliver Israel from bondage, and bring them to Sinai. And, if I may stress a point again, it does not matter in the least whether you deny the fact of revelation or accept it. At the present juncture you may please yourself. Here is the fact that only deliberate stupidity can deny, that the Bible declares the revelation, and declares that God spoke to Moses because He had first spoken to Abraham.

Paul, both in Romans and Galatians emphasises this

fact. Consequently, refusal of the Old Testament statements involves a refusal of the New Testament statements.

Equally clear it is, from the word of Paul in Gal. iii, 17, 18, that the passing and annulling of the Mosaic Covenant had no effect whatever upon the keeping of the Abrahamic Covenant. Now, when the Bible makes this so clear, why do the theologians dispute it ? They tell us, as one of their arguments against British-Israel, that our case is based upon the Old Covenant, and that as this Old Covenant is done away in Christ, our case fails. Are we not fully justified in turning round upon them and demanding that they read what the Bible says instead of going by hearsay ? Are we not justified in telling them that either they do not know what the Bible says or else they do not BELIEVE what the Bible says ?

For the Bible says that the Abrahamic Covenant stands. The Mosaic is done away in Christ, if you like, though even that statement needs to be modified, for it is the ritual side of the Law that is done away in Christ, not the moral law. But the Abrahamic stands. That is the important, KEY Covenant, and the Mosaic is not. If you do not believe that, if you do not accept it, it is simply because you do not believe and accept what the Bible sets out as true.

And my statement of the Bible fact is made all the clearer by an examination of the early chapters of Matthew and Luke. Read for yourself Luke i, 54, 55, 72, 73. Are not these verses clear enough in their statement and meaning ? Who would think it possible for any educated man to muddle their meaning ? Very well, then, let us go back to the original Covenant, as it is set out for our reading in Genesis.

We may observe, if we will, that there are three parts to the Covenant. One part is concerned with a people who shall derive life through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the exclusion of Ishmael and Esau, and who shall grow into a nation and company of nations. A second part is concerned with a definite land ; and if you care to mark the fact in your Bibles, you will find that there are over eighty references to this definite land in the Books of Moses.

There can be no question about it in the minds of reasonable men. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Israel, all took these promises about the land to have come from God, and to mean exactly what they say.

Then the third part of the Covenant was the promise that "in thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Now I presume that we shall all agree that this third part of the promise is supposed to find its fulfilment in the work of Jesus Christ. I say, "suppose" advisedly, for there may be some reader who does not accept even the revelation of Jesus Christ. But even such a one may not dispute the fact that the teaching of the Church and of the New Testament is that Jesus of Nazareth came to fulfil this part of the Covenant. But is this part the **WHOLE** of the Covenant? Of course it is not. Yet if one were to judge by the common theology of the Churches, one would conclude that it is the whole.

People who take their teaching from the Churches, and who do not read the Bible, simply have no idea whatever that God had any other blessings in store for Abraham and his seed. They do not even know that in the Psalms and the Prophets expressions are used in identically the same way for both Israel and the Messiah. To each is promised the "Heritage of the heathen." Both are called "The Servant of God."

Even the third part of the Covenant, then, has a fulfilment in Israel, as well as in Jesus Christ, if the Bible view of the matter is apprehended.

But why should the other two parts of the Covenant be ignored? Are they of no moment? Did God mean one part only, and not all three?

The answer that will probably be given me by the ordinary Christian is, that what the Church is concerned with, what the Church must be concerned with, is the uplift of humanity, the winning of men into the Kingdom of Christ. It is the spiritual side alone which matters, I am constantly told. We must deal with spiritual things and

wean men's minds and hearts from things worldly and material. Oh, how dearly do our Evangelicals love to preach this way. And how much in agreement with the Modernists in this matter are the Evangelicals.

Yes, horrified as my Evangelical friends will be at the very suggestion, I must tell them that on this point they are in full agreement with the Modernist. For the Modernist asks us to ignore the material, and think only of the spiritual. He declares that the spiritual side is the only side that matters, and therefore we need to find some new basis for our teaching ; some new mode of expressing Christ and Christianity which will help in the solution of modern problems and explain modern circumstances. The Bible basis is out of date. It was all very well for Israel 2,000 years ago. They needed a material basis. But modern difficulties demand another basis.

Incidentally, when one asks what are these modern problems, and in what way do they differ in principle from the problems of past ages, one never gets any satisfactory answer. For the fact is that the problems are exactly the same in all generations. But tell me, is it much use trying to bring men into the Kingdom of Christ, unless we know what that Kingdom of Christ means ? Is it much use trying to win men for the Kingdom, unless it be agreed that it is Christ that the world needs ?

There are thousands who earnestly desire the uplift of humanity who are by no means persuaded that the way of Christ is the best way ; much less the only way. Moreover, there are thousands of Christians who, believing that Christ's way is the best and only way, are yet divided amongst themselves into rival camps on the question of what really is Christ's way and Christ's Kingdom.

And so vital are the differences of opinion, so utterly contradictory are some of the ideas and doctrines, that it becomes true to say that the Christ preached by one Church is fundamentally different from the Christ preached by another. Without thinking or saying a wrong thought about any of them, who can reconcile the doctrines of

Romanism with those of Christian Science ? Who can, at one and the same time be an Anglican and a Christadelphian ?

There are those who hold fast to the doctrine that Jesus Christ is God and Saviour, and who hold that this is absolutely essential and fundamental, because it is declared in the Bible. There are others who, whilst sincerely and earnestly calling themselves Christian, and taking the same Bible as their handbook, yet emphatically deny that Jesus Christ is God, or even Saviour.

How anyone who accepts the Bible can possibly deny the Deity of Jesus absolutely passes my understanding. But none the less it is a fact that men do deny it, even though they assert that they accept the Scriptures.

But surely, if we are to get to grips with the problems, and make real headway, we must first agree about the essentials ? Our very division is our greatest weakness.

And if we are to agree about the essentials, we must start with the Covenant God made with Abraham, and get to understand just what it states. It is not a bit of use talking about scrapping the Old Testament, and confining our teaching to the New, for the New rests upon the Old. The basis of the New Testament teaching about Christ is the Abrahamic Covenant. If you don't or won't accept that, then you don't or won't accept the New Testament, and there is an end. Your doctrinal position is exactly that of the atheist or agnostic.

Nay, you are in actually a worse position. For one can argue with an atheist or agnostic on reasonable lines, but one cannot argue with one who refuses to be reasonable.

Very well, then, when the Abrahamic Covenant is plainly concerned with three parts, and not with one only, who is any man that he should declare that two parts can be completely ignored ? Is it not really stupid to ignore the two ? Yet this is exactly what the theologians do. It is exactly what our profound scholars do. It is exactly what the Evangelicals do. But do we not atrophy our whole cause and case for Christ's Kingdom when we despise or

neglect the method God took—or shall I put it, the way the Bible sets out God's method—to declare that Kingdom and to prepare for it ?

If Stephen, Peter, Paul, James, John, all found it helpful (I might quite justifiably use the word, "necessary") to refer back to Abraham and the Covenant in order to prove their case for the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, shall not we be wise if we do the same ? Am I not correct in saying that Jesus of Nazareth is nothing more than Jesus of Nazareth to our Modernists, just because they have thrown aside the Old Testament, and have discarded the New Testament method of declaring Jesus ? I am sure I am. I am fully convinced that a great deal of the trouble is that we imagine ourselves to be very much wiser than our fathers, and so, to a very large extent, we have decided that we can dispense with the knowledge and experience of the past, and can start afresh, on altogether new lines. Hence the chaos in the Churches to-day ; the haziness of the theologians ; the hard fact that our leaders do not lead, and that our preachers and teachers have no sound message to deliver. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle ?"

So I bring you back again to the Covenant, which, made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, confirmed to Israel in Egypt, confirmed again to Ephraim-Israel by the prophets, after the break between Israel and Judah, is yet once more confirmed in Christ Jesus, and is made the basis of the preaching of the Gospel of Salvation. The New Testament distinctly tells us that the Abrahamic Covenant still stands, still holds good.

Very well, then, Christ I can see ; I have the historic record of His first coming in the Gospel story ; I have the details of His work and teaching in the New Testament, and a most extraordinary story it is, full of accounts of miracles.

But where is the Nation ? And what about the Land ?

Oh, yes, we can see the Land also. "But surely," says a restless critic, "you are not going to insist on the geographical details, are you ? Isn't that carrying literalness too

far ?” But why not ? Can we do anything else but insist on the geographical details ? There they are in the Covenant, then why should we ignore them ?

The Rev. S. H. Wilkinson, in his book, “British-Israelism Examined,” tells us that we should not take these things literally, that we should seek the spiritual meaning from these promises. But will you tell me what is the spiritual lesson that I can derive from these more than eighty references to the Land in the books of Moses ? And why, indeed, should I try to find a spiritual message in the references ?

Did God mean to give Israel a definite land, or did He not ? Let the critic answer that question fairly and honestly. And if I am to find a spiritual meaning, then Israel, too, should have sought a spiritual meaning. Israel was wrong in looking towards the land of Canaan. She should have been quite content with the wilderness life, with the God-given manna, and the water drawn from the rock. She should have spent her days exercising her mind with spiritual flights of fancy about a spiritual land.

But we know as an historical fact, which not even an atheist can deny, that Israel settled down in part of the promised land, and developed it ; that she occupied this part of the land for over eight hundred years ; that she became two kingdoms in the land ; that she even extended her dominion to beyond Damascus, in the days of the second Jeroboam.

¶ We are therefore dealing with material realities, not with spiritual fancies.

Now, if Christ came, as the New Testament says He did, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, might we not expect, with every claim to right and reason, that sooner or later this land should become the possession of Israel ? If this be not granted, may I ask on what possible grounds the Balfour Declaration rests ?

Now, the amazing thing is that Mr. Wilkinson and all who, like him, are profoundly interested in missions to the

Jews, will teach you that the Jews should and will possess the land. They tell *us* to find a spiritual message in the promise of God to Abraham. They tell the *Jew* to find a material hope in the same promise. How wonderfully consistent are these opponents of British-Israel ! And the next amazing thing is, that when we read the Bible we find that the land was never promised to the Jews. It was promised to Israel.

I am aware that our opponents try to prove that Israel and the Jews are identical, but as I shall show you in a later chapter, this theory is utterly untenable by a careful student of Scripture and history. Indeed, so far from the Jews being "all Israel," they do not form even "all Judah." Scripture makes it abundantly clear that the House of Judah suffered from several divisions, and the Jews are the descendants of one only of these divisions.

Let us now, in connection with the "land" promises, consider our Lord's words : "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the nations, until the time of the nations be fulfilled."

It is most definitely and unquestionably, the actual literal city of Jerusalem that is here meant.

Will anyone wish to argue that under present rule Jerusalem is still trodden down ? Have not we British brought freedom to the land, after nineteen hundred years of oppression and desolation ? Is not the country now under a Government which honestly seeks its blessing and peaceful development ?

I have seen the land with my own eyes, and have had opportunity of comparing the work of Britain in Palestine with the work of France in Syria. I say "comparing," but the fact of the matter is that comparison is almost out of the question. France has done nothing whatever to improve Syria, has actually increased the desolation of parts, whilst Britain has spent millions upon roads, trees, water supplies and other blessings for both Jew and Arab.

But if once you admit that British rule is for the uplift, and not for the treading down of Jerusalem, you are com-

pelled to admit that the "Times of the nations" are fulfilled. Unless, of course, you are willing to argue that our Lord made a mistake in this matter. And if once you admit that the times of the nations are fulfilled, you are bound to admit that Israel is in possession again.

I have heard more than one clergyman, even more than one bishop, say with joy, that when Allenby entered Jerusalem the "times of the nations" had come to an end. And yet these same folk pour scorn upon the idea that Israel again holds the land.

Another detail from the blessings of the Covenant. Will you tell me what is the spiritual lesson which I may derive from Gen. xxxv, 11, and similar passages? "A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins." There can be no reading of the Church into these words, for by no honest or common-sense interpretation can you make the Church into a nation and a company of nations. Still less can you read individualism into the words.

The fact is that these words can have one meaning, and one meaning only. Therefore the only matter for us to consider is this: Have they been fulfilled, or are they ever likely to be fulfilled? If you say, "No," you cut the ground, logically, from under your own feet, for your belief in Jesus of Nazareth as Christ, the Messiah. If God has not confirmed the **WHOLE** Covenant in Christ, then the **WHOLE** Covenant is worthless. If you say that the promises will be fulfilled upon the Jews in the future, taking the common, but quite erroneous view that the Jews are all Israel, you must abandon the Scriptural terms of the Covenant, and you must also go back upon the admission you have already made, and declare that Jerusalem is still trodden down under "barbarian" heels. You cannot have it both ways.

The opponent of British-Israel is, then, on the horns of a dilemma. He admits the truth of the "salvation" aspect of the Covenant. It is indeed his sole Gospel. For in spite of all his evangelical profession of love for the whole word of God he is quite content to ignore more than three-quarters

of the Bible message. He is compelled to admit the "land" aspect of the Covenant, and to agree that Israel actually did dwell once in part of the land. Very well, then, he must either accept the truth of the "national" aspect of the Covenant or go right back upon his whole previous position and deny what he has already declared. What will he do ?

If the opponent happens to be agnostic, or perhaps professedly atheist, he is faced with the historical facts that the three parts of the Covenant find their completion in Christ and the British Empire, and those historical facts may not be set aside by any man as of no consequence.

It has been declared by one opponent, whose letter lies before me as I write, that the teaching about national redemption and a national aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant is absolutely unwarranted. "There is no such thing ever taught in the Bible as the redemption of Israel."

This man is not, as some of my readers may suppose, an ignorant little schoolboy, but is actually a Doctor of Divinity.

The redemption of Israel from the bondage of Egypt is stated in no uncertain terms in Exodus. The redemption of Israel after her divorce from God is equally forcibly taught in the pages of the prophets, and it is only ignorance or unbelief which can venture to deny this.

There is no getting away from these facts ; nor from the conclusion to be drawn from these facts.

If, then, any man rejects the conclusion, he equally rejects the WHOLE Abrahamic Covenant, and must consequently reject the very Gospel that is built up on the Abrahamic Covenant.

CHAPTER V

THE PARABLES OF BALAAM

IN the Book of Numbers, so-called because it contains the account of the Divinely authorised census of Israel, there is the historic record of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness. Those wanderings were due to the refusal of Israel to enter the Land of Canaan, and to take possession of their God-appointed inheritance, when they first had the opportunity.

In chapters xiii and xiv of this book there is told to us the story of the spying out of the land by the twelve spies—one chosen from each of the inheriting tribes of Israel.

We are given the report of the spies, and we are shewn the contrast between the faithfulness of the two, and their courageous optimism, and the weakness and cowardice of the ten. We are told of the decision of Israel to accept the verdict of the ten, rather than to follow the advice of the two, even though that advice was consistent with the promises of God.

It is rather interesting to notice two things in passing. First, that it is one of the many instances given in the Bible of right resting with the minority. The majority was wrong, as it so very often is. Second, that the two faithful spies, who believed so definitely in God's purposes and in God's power to fulfil those purposes, were Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, and Joshua, of the tribe of Ephraim. These two tribes are marked as the leading tribes of Israel. But in spite of the position occupied by these two, Israel refused their advice and their appeal to the faithful power of Almighty God.

Israel disbelieved, and in consequence rejected the inheritance promised to them through Abraham. They were punished, as every reader of the story knows, by the forty

years' wanderings in the wilderness, whilst God weeded out the rebels and trained up a new generation of Israel to take the place of the faithless generation.

It is worth your while to meditate upon this fact, that God did not reject or cast off Israel for disobedience and substitute another people. He cast off a particular generation and trained up another generation of exactly the same people. It is also worthy of your attention that Ezekiel, in his twentieth chapter, uses this story of the wilderness wanderings as an historical comparison of Israel in his own day, and of Israel down the ages, and he declares God's fixed determination to make Israel an elect people indeed, in spite of their lapses, for His Holy Name's sake ; to rule over the stubborn people whose will shall be bent to his.

When we come to the story of Balaam we are almost at the end of the wanderings, and plans are being made for the new generation of Israelites to enter the land rejected by their fathers.

It will be advisable for us to spend a short time considering Balaam and his character before we touch upon his prophetic parables.

He comes into the story in a way that is peculiar, at least to our modern western minds. For there was a custom, almost universal, in those far off days of ignorance and superstition, which makes us smile. For, of course, in this glorious twentieth century, education and the wonderful progress of civilisation have made superstition to flee before the face of enlightenment, and ignorance fears to raise its head amongst us. The old custom was this : that before a people went to war there was held a religious ceremony, the most important part of which was the formal cursing of the enemy.

There comes to my mind Germany's Hymn of Hate and the fulminations of the ex-Kaiser in his appeals to the great German God of Kultur. Was not that a distinct parallel with the ancient custom ?

I turn to the book of the Prophet Ezekiel and I read the account of Nebuchadnezzar standing at the parting of the

roads, consulting the Teraphim, and examining the entrails of an animal ; very anxious to gain the full approval of his gods and to make sure of his success in his campaign against Judah. Now, Balak, king of Moab, was evidently troubled in his mind about the power of the Moabite gods, and he doubted the effect of their response to the incantations of the Moabite priests. He was none too sure that their cursing of Israel would have the desired result. So, determined to take no risks, and concluding that a little outside help would be quite useful, both for his gods and his priests, he sends for Balaam, who had rather a good reputation for success in the required line of business.

Now, some have thought that Balaam, the hireling prophet, was a heathen and an imposter, who did not know what was meant by righteousness ; who knew nothing about Jehovah ; and that consequently his parables, and so-called prophecies, cannot possibly have any serious meaning or any bearing upon Israel's destiny and history.

But let us make no mistake about it. The words that he uses at the end of his first parable suggest that, in spite of the man's glaring faults, he did know what was right, and he knew the value of right. Moreover, there are Bible references to Balaam which will confirm this.

In Micah. vi, 8, there are these words written in reference to Balaam : "He hath shewn thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." He may have been a hypocrite, and he certainly was a rogue, but he was not an ignorant man. He was no idolater, but one who knew clearly enough the truth about God and God's purposes.

His first answer, too, to Balak's messengers makes it evident that he knew what was meant by righteousness. The trouble lay in the fact that he did not allow his knowledge to influence his life to any effective degree. Like many another man, he knew what was right and wrong, but he took no care to do the one and avoid the other. Balaam is simply a glaring example of a very common fact, that

knowledge and action frequently disagree with one another, especially when money matters are involved. For when Balak sent his messengers he made an offer of a large monetary reward to Balaam, and Balaam could get neither his eye nor his heart off that money. The obstacle in the way of obtaining the money was duty; and Balaam set about the task, the hopeless task, of making duty conform to desire in this particular matter. And the way he chose was to try to get his duty altered. In other words, he tried to get God to change his mind concerning Israel.

It was for this that Balaam dallied and bandied words with Balak's second messengers. It was for this that he built the altars and offered so many sacrifices. It was for this that he used enchantments. And when by these methods he failed to change God's purposes; when, after all his scheming, he had been compelled to bless instead of to curse, he still sought to gain the reward, and the overthrow of Israel, in a subtle, underhand way, for he suggested to Balak that the tempting of Israel to idolatry and immorality would probably have the desired effect, by calling down God's wrath upon Israel in judgment. How well he succeeded in his attempt is recorded for us in the twenty-fifth chapter of Numbers, and is mentioned by both Peter and Jude in their New Testament letters.

More important, though, than the character of Balaam, interesting as it is, and forming, as it does, an excellent study in self-deceit, the character of Balaam's message is far more important. In spite of much adverse criticism, it is yet true that his message is worthy of deep attention.

It is delivered in four parables, which are notable for the dignity of the language in which they are couched, parables that reflect a clear conviction in Balaam's mind that he really was speaking at the instance of God.

There is a very genuine ring about the message, which is in itself an answer to criticism, and there can be little doubt in the mind of the unbiassed reader that Balaam himself believed that his prophecies were of Divine authorship, and could not be gainsaid or refuted.

Let us consider each parable in turn.

You will find the first in Numbers xxiii, 7-10.

You will notice that after explaining that he has come in response to Balak's pressing invitation, he declares that Balak's hope against Israel could never obtain God's approval. The most striking phrase in this parable is found in verse 9. What does it mean ?

We are told so confidently by the critics that it is as impossible for a nation to live alone as it is for an individual ; that contact with other peoples is a vital necessity ; that even dependence upon other peoples is indispensable. This is true, so far as it goes. But in spite of international relationships, of inter-communication through commerce, and its implications ; in spite of the exigencies of politics and such like, it is yet quite a possible and practical matter for either a person or a people to dwell alone.

Indeed, it is a fact that we ought all to be willing to acknowledge, that a man can be alone and lonely, even in a great city, with crowds surging round him. And this kind of loneliness is the harder to bear.

It is quite true, of course, that Israel in Palestine was in direct contact with several surrounding nations, and that she entered into commercial and political dealings with them. As an example, Solomon was very dependent upon Hiram, King of Tyre, for his work of building the Temple.

Yet was not Israel alone, inasmuch as her religion, her national ideals, her laws, her outlook, her destiny, were all completely different from those of the surrounding nations ? Argue, if you will, that Israel's claim to be the Chosen People of God cannot be admitted. The very fact that the claim was made and is emphasised in the Scriptures is in itself an argument in favour of the dwelling alone of Israel.

Did not the very differences mean that she was surrounded by a host of enemies, or, at best, of unsympathetic peoples ? She possessed a religion which, in direct contrast to the idolatries of the other nations, was conspicuous for its worship of One Unseen God, Whom they were distinctly forbidden to portray either by carving or by picture. Was

not that abundantly sufficient to mark them off from other peoples and to keep them separate ?

Have we not enough witnesses in history to testify to this truth ? I feel convinced that if critics would read history before they expressed their opinions about these Bible ideas that their criticisms would be stillborn.

Consider the story of the Albigenses in Southern France, and that of the Waldensians in Northern Italy.

In each case we find a community shut off from its neighbours entirely by the one factor of religious worship. In each case we find the community able to maintain its independence and ensure its existence, in spite of every opposition and persecution. Each was, undeniably, a people dwelling alone, though never left alone by enemies.

Very well, then, the critics who set aside these words of Balaam on the ground that they predicate an impossible condition are faced with the flat contradiction of hard facts in history. Indeed, I would make the statement, and stand by it, that if no one had ever suggested a parallel between this foretold condition of Israel and the common position of Britain, no one would have thought of denying these ideas of Balaam.

I am afraid that it is only too true to say that much of the fault-finding with prophecy is faked to provide opposition to either the teaching of Christianity itself or of British-Israel. I am sure it is neither honest nor sincere criticism.

But Israel's "splendid isolation" was concerned with more than the religion. It was concerned with her law, her social life, her morals, and her national ideals. Surely, then, the "aloneness" is bound to be complete.

Her law differed in its very fundamentals from the law of other peoples. And it makes no difference to this fact, even if it can be established that Moses modelled his laws upon the code of an earlier law giver.

In her social life, intermarriage with foreigners was forbidden, and the strictness of that law is marked again and again in the Scriptures.

It is true that there are notable exceptions mentioned,

but they were exceptional enough to be notable. The purity of the nation was well maintained.

In her national ideals, believing herself to be the Chosen People of the One True God, how could the idea of dwelling alone become anything else but an accomplished fact ?

And, as I have said, there is no difference made to the accomplishment of the fact, by the argument that Israel was mistaken in her belief. She had the belief, no matter what the justification for it ; and undoubtedly belief tends to accomplishment.

When you put the four factors together, religion, law, social ideals, national ideals, you will find that the statement of Balaam really becomes very easy of realisation.

It is possible that, in the course of its history, every nation has possessed one, or maybe two, of these marks which tend towards dwelling alone in the world amidst the other nations. There are no peoples or nations that have possessed the four together, except the Israelites and the British ; and that there is a clear correspondence between the two nations, and between the attitude of other nations towards both, will not be disputed by any serious student of history, not even by the clergy. Indeed, it is frankly admitted that there is such a correspondence, and it is lightly put down to the credit of coincidence.

Furthermore, Balaam's prophecy is concerned not only with the idea of Israel dwelling alone, but with the thought also of Israel not being reckoned amongst the nations.

That surely means that the other nations shall recognise the separateness of Israel.

Now, apart from the question of an identity, have we not, in our island position and history, an excellent illustration of the meaning of the phrase ? Do not our geography books, with unconscious self-conceit, maybe, speak of Great Britain AND Europe ? And though we have often exercised a paramount influence in the counsels of Europe, do we not remain apart ?

Why, our very position as an island people compels us to remain apart, whether we will or not. And the fact itself is

recognised in the very urging by many idealistic folk to-day, that we, as a people, should be less exclusive.

All the while that our British-Israel opponents are saying "nonsense" to our interpretation of this prophecy, they and others are busy with appeals to the British public to be international in outlook, and to cast away our habit of thinking in terms of Britain, as if we were a people apart !

There is nothing outrageous, therefore, in our British-Israel claim. We take these words in their very plainest meaning, without any juggling at interpretation, and we find that the meaning applies to Britain in a very remarkable degree.

The natural question to ask, then, is : "Is this correspondence between Israel and Britain intended ?"

There is nothing unreasonable in the question ; it is, I repeat, a natural question, because there is, without any doubt whatever, a clear comparison between what the prophets foretell for Israel and what the British are and do. Was the similarity intended ? Our British-Israel contention is that it was intended, and that it cannot be explained by coincidence.

The second parable is found in chapter xxiii, 18-24.

Here we have expressed to us, in plain enough words, the utter folly of anyone attempting to change the mind and purpose of God concerning Israel. The original declared blessing could not be reversed. Why not ? Because that blessing involves the honour of God.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the Covenant Blessings promised to Abraham, and through Abraham to Israel, depend for their fulfilment, first and last, upon the oath of God.

Any denial of this is a denial of Scripture. No question of interpretation is involved at all. The Old Testament says that God swore by an oath to Abraham. The New Testament endorses this in words that can be read and understood by a first-form child. If, then, the idea be refused ; if it be declared that the blessings depend upon Israel's obedience, and not upon God's oath, it is not British-Israel

interpretation that is set aside, it is the perfectly plain word of Scripture that is denied.

In the preface to a booklet written against our case, a bishop of the Anglican Communion has written that, "Of course, all God's Covenants are dependent upon our obedience."

Now, criticism of the Bible is quite legitimate, I know. If I may put it this way, the Bible must stand its corner, like any other book, and be subject to question. But it is not legitimate, it is not common sense, to deny that the Bible says a certain thing, when a child can read for himself and easily understand. The learned bishop, then, was hopelessly wrong. God, we are plainly told, made His promise to Abraham, not on the ground of "if you will obey My voice," but on the ground of "because THOU HAST obeyed My voice." The Covenant FOLLOWED obedience, and therefore depends upon the honour of God to keep what He had promised as the reward of obedience.

Critical questions about the Bible, I say, are legitimate. It may well be asked, for example, how Balaam could ever come to say : "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" ? How can such a statement ever be considered either inspired or correct ? Was not the record of Israel up to that time a very sorry one ? Had not the very wanderings for forty years been directly due to Israel's perversity and iniquity ? How ever could it be said, then, by a God of Truth and righteousness, "He hath not beheld iniquity" ? Such questions are most natural, and they are almost bound to come to the mind of any intelligent reader. But there is a full and reasonable answer to the questions.

In the Ark of the Covenant there were kept three articles of historic value, the pot of Manna, Aaron's Rod, and the Tables of the Commandments.

The Manna testified—did it not ?—to Israel's persistent complaining. The rod was a continual reminder to Israel of a serious rebellion which threatened to wreck the nation almost at the start of its career. The Tables of the Law were

those that replaced the first Tables, broken by Moses at the sight of Israel's idolatry. There was, therefore, any amount of most uncomfortable evidence of the iniquity and perverseness of Israel. But . . . but . . . these things were all under the Mercy-Seat. Israel's iniquity was covered, and Israel was taught that God looks, not at the sin, but at the blood of Christ, which covers the sin.

I need not enlarge on this point here, for it is explained in the chapters on Israel's High Priest and The Atonement. It is sufficient for us to realise, at this moment, that the criticism, though legitimate, has an answer.

The third parable comes in chapter xxiv, 3-9.

This parable, which is not addressed directly to Balak, gives to us the picture of a free and prosperous people, deeply rooted in religious trust and faith.

Somehow, the description does not read like that of Israel in Palestine, even in the brighter days of Ruth and David ; for verse 7 has a much wider outlook than that of a people in Canaan.

We have been criticised for applying this verse to the British Empire, and speaking of it as a reference to a maritime empire spread over the seven seas. We are told that the word "waters" means "fresh waters," and that here it is used to denote irrigation, and that it has nothing whatever to do with the idea of Israel in far off lands beyond the seas.

Well, let it be so. Let the criticism stand. I would only ask you to notice that the Hebrew word is exactly the same as the one translated "waters" in the verses : "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," and "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." But let the criticism stand. Let the critics have their own way. Let them use arguments against us which no fair-minded or honest man would ever use. Let us agree that the word here means irrigation waters.

Will anyone tell me where and when irrigation has been used in Palestine ? In Mesopotamia, yes ; in Egypt, yes ; but in Palestine, no.

But the British have been the greatest developers of schemes of irrigation. Schemes far beyond anything ever conceived by Egypt or Babylon have been carried to completion by the British. We have built the Assuan and Sennar Dams in Egypt and the Sudan, and thereby converted millions of acres of desert into fruitful lands. We have constructed vast irrigation works in the Punjab, to water out of existence the Desert of India. Our engineering works in Australia are converting the wastes there into gardens.

The British-Israel critic, then, I venture to suggest, is very much in a quandary, and his desire for a particular translation of words does not help *his* cause, but actually strengthens *ours*. One might as well accept the simple translation and agree that the suggestion of the prophet is one of an Israel scattered on the waters for a purpose, possessing through the seas the vantage points of the earth, a maritime people by the Grace of God.

Will you notice, too, how this parable finishes with the blessing originally made to Abraham and to Jacob, and so confirms God's promises to the national seed of the patriarchs ?

Thus it is made clear that the Abrahamic Covenant is a National Covenant, and is concerned with Israel the nation. It may not be "spiritualised" without doing violence to the Scriptures and to the promises of God.

The fourth parable you will read in chapter xxiv, 15-19.

In this message we find words used that can very readily be called Messianic. Will anyone be inclined to quarrel with me if I say that the words of verse 17 are intended to foretell a Messiah for Israel, a King who shall lead Israel to triumph ? The Israel of Balaam's day seems to have faded awhile out of the sight of the speaker, and the Israel of the future, under the Messiah, to have come into view.

But though the words are Messianic, they are not concerned with any spiritual kingdom in the usual meaning of that phrase. Rather do they review a people under Divine

leadership, who have triumphed over their enemies and who have proceeded to the headship over the nations, even as God designed.

So the parables range through the whole of Israel's history and give to us a few striking impressions of the people who were chosen out for service in the world by God and who have ever been under His guiding providence.

There are certain expressions used which seem to make it quite clear that Balaam is not concerned in his parables with the people we call the Jews, and so he also bears his witness to the Bible-teaching of Israel, and not the Jews, as heir to the Abrahamic Covenant.

For though it is as true of the Jews as it is of the British, that they are a people dwelling alone, not reckoned amongst the nations, the isolation of the Jews is a curse, not a blessing, whereas the words of Balaam indicate a state of blessedness.

Then, too, the words, "Who can count the dust of Jacob or number the fourth part of Israel," are scarcely applicable to the Jews, who, marvellous as their very survival is, are yet few in number and scattered.

Again, there has been no king in Jewry since 586 B.C., the puppet Herods being scarce worth the trouble of calling kings, seeing that their rule was but over a portion of Palestine, and that only by the courtesy of the Cæsars.

Yet again, the picture of a maritime people, and of a people busy with irrigation, is one that is utterly foreign to Jewish history.

The Jews have never been occupied in business in great waters, neither have they been a colonising or an administrative people.

Finally, the heraldry of the two peoples Israel and Judah though it may find a connection with the lion and the unicorn of our royal coat of arms, as indeed many British-Israel teachers declare, does not touch the Jews.

The heraldry is that of Israel and Judah together, and is not that of a people who form a small, and none too pure, portion of Judah.

No, the parables do not envisage the Jews, but Israel and Judah, and they give us, as I have said, a few striking impressions of Israel and Judah in conjunction, their work in the world, their position, influence, destiny. And history has recorded for us in no uncertain way the completion of these prophecies in the British Empire.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAW OF SINAI

IN these chapters on Israel's work and creed the chief purpose that I have in mind is that of definite instruction in the actual message of the Bible. There is to-day a fair amount of rather partial and haphazard knowledge, which has led to the formation of many religious theories. These theories are often plausible, often seemingly Biblical in their foundation and in their outlook, but because they do not consider the whole Bible they are incomplete, and often go very seriously wrong.

The only safe method that you and I can adopt in these days of many "isms," of many creeds, is to study the whole Bible and seek to grasp the whole message.

I am fully aware that this is a tremendous task, but however exacting, however large that task, in it lies our only safe precaution against error.

I am also fully aware that for most people faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and belief in His salvation, is quite sufficiently simple and complete. And often we British-Israel lecturers are confronted with the challenge that the plain Gospel is sufficient.

But, as a preacher seeking to prepare the way for the Lord's Coming, I have to face facts. I have to face all the facts of the situation.

And here is a fact that I cannot overlook—that there are in the Christian world to-day many rival doctrines—doctrines that are mutually destructive. There are many rival Churches, each claiming to hold the truth, and in some cases anathematising all who do not hold with them.

Let me give examples. Without saying a derogatory word, at the moment, against any of them, without

accusing any of them of error, is it not a plain fact that there are Romanists, Russellites, Christian Scientists, Christadelphians, Quakers, Protestants of various denominations ?

They cannot all be right. Some of them must be wrong.

If, for example, Christian Science is right ; if you have, in Mrs. Eddy's Handbook, Bible Truth, the correct interpretation of God's Will, then every other religion that calls itself Christian is not only wrong, but hopelessly wrong. And if wrong, then dangerous. Every professing Christian is in serious moral danger unless he accepts Christian Science as true, *if it be true*.

Or, again, if the Roman doctrine be true, then every other religion is wrong. If it be true that God has relegated to the Pope that power which the Pope claims, and in which the Roman Church professes to believe, then all we others—and Christian Scientists most of all—are in desperate plight. How can we ever get to heaven if the Pope really has the keys thereof ?

Now, each of these Churches claims the Bible for its foundation, and each uses it more or less to justify its position. If, then, we are called upon to decide for ourselves, must we not find out what the Bible really says ?

I do want to establish this principle : that it does not matter what people *say* the Bible says. What matters is what the Bible *actually* says. Particular and private interpretations are more or less worthless. The fact that what is called "Catholic Tradition" puts a certain interpretation upon a certain scripture passage should not weigh with the sensible mind. That Mrs. Eddy puts another interpretation upon the same passage should not weigh with the sensible mind. That Emmanuel Swedenborg claimed special revelation for his interpretations should not weigh with the sensible mind. What every sensible person will do is what the Bereans did. They tested the theory in the light of Scripture.

They did not test Scripture in the light of the theory.

So in these chapters I shall not give you my own inter-

pretations and build upon these ; I shall ask you to look at the Scripture itself, and observe the sayings of Scripture.

Now, some happy critic may want to tell me that I cannot give you the actual Scripture because the original documents are not in existence, and that I could not read them if they were.

I would point out, therefore, that the English versions that we have, the Authorised and Revised Versions, which are the product of scholarship brought to bear upon both Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, are as accurate a translation as one could wish, and that as they form the textbook for these many creeds my position is logically sound. The various Churches use the English translations—I doubt if Mrs. Eddy, for example, knew a single word of either Greek or Hebrew—and consequently, as our case is based upon what the Bible says, and not upon the interpretation of the Bible—the English translation is amply sufficient.

I take you then, in the Authorised Version, to Exodus xix—to the encampment of Israel before Sinai, and to the receiving of the Law by Israel.

There are four phrases that strike me as I read. “I bare you on eagles’ wings and brought you unto Myself”; “A peculiar treasure”; “A kingdom of priests”; “An holy nation.”

Is it not perfectly clear to the ordinary mind of average intelligence that the Bible is here speaking of a definite people known as Israel. What the Bible says is that a people called Israel, lately coming from the land of Egypt, have come to a mountain in the wilderness of Sinai, and that there Jehovah spoke to them and declared these four things to them.

There’s no getting away from it, is there ? It is not a matter of interpretation or opinion, but of plain English, which can only bear one meaning. The moment we suggest, as do some Modernists, that the story of Sinai is a fable, or that by Israel God meant the Church, or that these phrases come from a mind that has lost the spiritual sense of God, we are not merely putting an unnatural interpretation upon

Scripture, but are actually depriving the words of their plain meaning. It must be clear, then, to every sincere reader and thinker that in these phrases Jehovah is declaring His intentions towards Israel, a people as definite, as easily distinguishable in history as the Chinese or Turks—a people, a nation, in the ordinary everyday meaning of the word. So, too, when the Bible says that Israel is to be a kingdom of priests, we must put upon the two words, “kingdom” and “priests,” the exact meaning that they would bear in any other book.

Consider for a moment the word “kingdom.” What is ordinarily meant by the term? A kingdom is that which is ruled over by a king; and it has as its constituent parts—a land, a people, a constitution—which constitution is administered by the king. That is the ordinary meaning of the word. A kingdom cannot exist without all four constituent parts.

A simple illustration will make this point clear. We speak, in our own history, of the days after Charles the First had been dethroned and decapitated, as the “Commonwealth,” and when Charles the Second came to the throne we speak of the Restoration—the Commonwealth had given way to the Kingdom.

But the use of the word here in Exodus compels us to ask the question, “Where were the four constituent parts then? Israel, the people, we can see; the land, the promised land of Canaan, we can see; the constitution, the Law of Sinai, is also apparent. But where is the king.

There is no need for any private opinion on this point; there is no room for any human theory or interpretation—the Bible makes it plain enough that God is the King of Israel. There is, first of all, the statement, “Ye shall be unto ME a kingdom of priests.”

“I bare you and brought you to MYSELF.” There is also the clear fact that everything connected with the law and with the ordering of Israel was given at God’s express word. Please remember that at the moment I am not concerned to argue the point of inspiration—any challenge by a critic

that these words were NOT spoken by God is quite beside the point. I am concerned only with what the Bible, says and this is the fact that any one of you can verify, that the expressions, "The Lord spake," "The Lord said," "The Lord commanded," occur 112 times in Exodus and 58 times in Leviticus—the two pre-eminent law books of the Old Testament. Whilst the expression, "I am the Lord," at the end of a command occurs 15 times in Exodus and 41 times in Leviticus.

Therefore the Bible makes God the Law-giver.

You have also the undeniable fact that the Bible definitely calls Jehovah the King of Israel, and speaks of the choosing by Israel of a king like the kings of the nations round about, as a rejection of Jehovah.

Finally, you will find that the Bible speaks of Israel's throne as the Throne of the Lord.

So, without straining, without the least theorising, without the slightest suggestion of any symbolic meaning, we are able to see that all four constituent parts of the kingdom are here, and that the Bible meaning is plain enough. Consequently, if you put any interpretation on the Bible words here, if you give to the words what is usually called a spiritual meaning, you deprive the Bible of its truth.

And therefore we are able to say with complete justification that any doctrine, any theological concept which speaks of the kingdom in any mystical and symbolical way, and which fails to give due place in that kingdom to literal, national Israel, is out of accord with Scripture, and is not to be accepted as true by any believer in the Bible.

Now the particular detail for our study at the present, is the constitution of the kingdom—the Law of Sinai.

This is declared to us mainly in Exodus and Leviticus, and it is commented upon in Paul's Epistles to Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. So is impressed upon our minds one vitally important Scripture fact—the fact that we can usually find in one Scripture an explanation of a problem in another Scripture. Do you want to learn what is meant in the New Testament by the expression, "The Kingdom of

Heaven" ? Very well, get a good concordance and trace out with its help the passages which deal with the subject, and you will be able to learn that the kingdom is concerned from one end to the other with Israel. Do you want to know all about the Law ? Go through the same process, and you will find that the Law of Sinai, in its religious aspect, is a type of Jesus Christ, and that the Bible itself explains this. So that you are not left to the task of finding an explanation of your own, which would in all probability differ from that of another reader—you are saved, if you will only be guided, from risk of making mistakes, because God is His own Interpreter.

The first part of the Law of Sinai to be given is the part known as the Ten Commandments.

These Ten Commandments are, in the main, set in the negative form of a "Thou shalt not," and because of this many modern teachers find no use for them. A positive law, they tell us, is so much more useful. Tell a child what he can do—don't tell him what he can't do. Well, this modern theorising sounds plausible enough, but none the less, it is far better to have a fence at the top of the cliff than either an ambulance at the bottom or a notice suggesting that an inland walk is really far prettier.

Further, the negative command is the natural order, and the necessary method of stating Law. And it should be remembered that we are dealing with Law and not with spiritual principles.

Israel was chosen out by God to be a nation of priests ; that is to say, that they were to minister to the world for God, in precisely the same capacity as the tribe of Levi ministered to Israel. Now, if you read the Book of Leviticus you will find that the work of the Levites was concerned with the religious side of Israel's life—the sacrifices and feasts ; with the education of the people ; with the health of the people ; and with the administration of the Law. Put into modern language, the Levites were the clergy, the teachers, the doctors, and the magistrates of Israel. This is more fully shewn in the chapter on Israel's High Priest.

Training for the Levites was obviously necessary, and all training involves a set of negative rules. There are always things to be avoided, things that you must not do, if you are to be fitted for your post. If, then, Levites needed training for their ministration to Israel, so exactly did Israel need training for an identical ministration to the world. Consequently the negative Law of Exodus xx was absolutely necessary.

The same reasoning follows if we take up the other phrase "an holy nation." The word "holy" means separated—separated for a Divine use. It does not mean pure and sinless. Let us be quite clear about this. A great deal of misunderstanding and error is simply due to the fact that people are careless about the terms and words they use. Israel is definitely called "an holy nation"; and in the dispute between Aaron and the sons of Korah, Korah and his companions claimed equal privileges with Aaron on the ground that all the congregation was holy. That was true, but all the congregation was not pure and sinless.

The same point is emphasised in the New Testament. Disciples of the Lord are called "saints" in the New Testament; but that does not mean that they were perfect. By no means. Paul addresses the Christians at Corinth as "saints," and goes on to rebuke them for their sins; one of them for the gross sin of adultery.

The word "saint," or "holy," simply means "set apart," and the setting apart is the first step in sanctification and service; it is not the last step. *We begin* by being "holy" and we grow in grace till we are perfect. So Israel *began* by being "holy"—"set apart"—and the Law of Sinai was given them to train them and lead them on to perfection. The Law of Sinai then served for Israel as the grace of God serves for the Christian.

There are certain details of the civil Law of Sinai to which I wish to draw your special attention here, because they show the very profound wisdom of the law, as well as its common-sense justice. In Exodus xxi, 18, we read that if one man injure another one, the assailant shall pay the

injured one for the loss of his time and cause him to be thoroughly healed.

Nowadays the penalty for assault is sometimes imprisonment, sometimes a fine. But the injured person does not get any compensation, and has to pay his own doctor's bill. Our modern critic tells us that he has no use for the Law of Sinai ; but tell me, is not its provision here infinitely more just, more sensible, and far more likely to achieve good results in *preventing* assault than our own "improved method." Again, if you read Exodus xxii, you will find out how God lays down the important principle of the right of property.

It is worth while noticing that this principle runs absolutely counter to the principles of Marxian and Fabian Socialism, which are so popular to-day, and it justifies me in saying that no one who truly regards God and God's Word can ever be a Socialist.

The same clear, common-sense justice of this Law of Sinai is seen in Levi. vi.

Nowadays people defraud their neighbours, bring ruin or severe loss to their clients, and our law makes no provision for restitution. We talk about the "disgrace of imprisonment" and the "agony of mind" produced by it.

But is not this talk mere empty sentimentalism in most cases ? If this disgrace, this so-called agony of mind, were a reality, would it not act as a real deterrent in crime ? Of course it would. But the fact remains that crimes of fraud are very much on the increase, and our man-made laws are proved to be utterly inefficient, for they fail in their chief purpose—that of preventing crime.

Now, we British have the *principle* of the Law of Sinai in our administration of the law—for we have the Mosaic principle of innocence till guilt is proved.

Why, then, accepting and being guided by the principle, do we not put into practice the enactments and penalties of the Law of Sinai ?

But we shall be told that any suggestion on our part to return to the details of the Law of Sinai is a retrograde step,

expressly discouraged by Paul ; and if we are to give heed to what the Bible *says* ; to the plain word of Scripture, we shall conclude that the Law of Sinai is done away in Christ. "The law was our schoolmaster or tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Therefore, "How turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly elements," seeing that "as many as are under the works of the law are under a curse."

Now, that is quite correct, so far as the quoting of it goes. But we shall surely be foolish if we jump to the conclusion that because we are not under the law we are outside the law.

We ought not to read into Paul's words something that he did not intend to convey. A moment's thought will show us that Paul was not advocating the setting aside of the law and its enactments simply because Christ has come, saving men freely by His grace.

Would you dare to say, for example, that the Ten Commandments are not binding upon you because you are a Christian justified by faith ? Of course you would not. Exactly the reverse. You would say that the law was all the more binding upon you inasmuch as the Lord Whom you serve put a fuller and deeper meaning upon it in the Sermon on the Mount.

For example, Jesus took the Sixth and Seventh Commandment and made them apply, not only to the act, but to the very thought which prompts the acts. If Jesus therefore made the Commandments so much stronger and forceful in their application, how shall we say that to return to the law is a retrograde step ?

Would it not be far wiser if we had another look at Paul's words to read what he said ? And we shall find that what Paul is talking about is justification and salvation. He is not considering the application of the law to civil life, he is not talking about the penalties of the law—and we have already seen how common sense is the law's application to civil life—he is talking about salvation.

Up to the coming of Jesus the safety of the Israelite—and

Paul is clearly not considering anybody but the Israelite, for the Law of Sinai was never given to, and never applicable to, non-Israelite people—up to the coming of Jesus the Israelite hope of safety lay in keeping the law—and Paul says, what we must all recognise as true, that it was a burden “neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.” But when Jesus came safety lay in faith in Him.

We can all see, surely, how difficult it is to keep all the details of the Law of Sinai—how difficult even to keep to the principle of it. But breaking even a small detail of it is breaking the law—isn't it? Even as John says: “Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.” But inasmuch as all have sinned, all are transgressors of the law, and therefore all have failed to keep the conditions of safety under the law.

Does that mean that by preaching faith and grace we are making the law of none effect? “No,” says Paul; “God forbid, we establish the law.”

So then we shall not rashly conclude that our British-Israel respect for the law is a retrograde step, a returning to the weak and beggarly elements.

But there is a further consideration for us. The Law of Sinai is concerned with two elements—a civil element and a religious element. It has regulations governing the relationships between man and man, and it has regulations governing the duties of man to God.

Many of these latter regulations, the ordinances directing Israel's worship, have of necessity ceased to have practical meaning—for they pointed forward to Jesus as the Mediator, and foreshadowed His supreme sacrifice.

A few examples will suffice.

In the feast of the Passover Israel not only commemorated her deliverance from Egypt, but partook of a ceremony that prefigured “Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us.” Again, the Golden Candlestick, which was the one light of the Tabernacle, prefigured Christ, the Light of the world. Whilst yet again, the Day of Atonement teaches of Christ; and by its definite ritual shews how our sins are borne

away from us by the propitiatory death of Christ. And so it is possible to go through the story of the Tabernacle, noting its details ; and through the feasts and sacrifices of Israel, noting their details, and to see in all a picture of Jesus Christ. When Paul speaks, then, of the weak and beggarly elements of the law, is he not referring to these things and telling us that we want none of them now that Christ is come.

A photograph is a very acceptable memento of a friend, and a useful reminder, but, if I may be somewhat flippant, what man would kiss the photograph of a girl if the original were by his side.

You don't need the prophecy when you have come to the fulfilment of it—you don't need the ritual now that Christ has come. And that Paul's reference to this ritual, and to these old sacrifices, as weak and beggarly elements, is a justifiable one, will be understood if we think for a moment. For however important the ritual law might have been, however prophetic in its pictures of Christ, yet, after all, it gave a very inadequate representation of Christ, and it was feeble in its result. Just as a photograph may be useful as a reminder, but it is very inadequate, very weak and beggarly as a substitute.

The Law of Sinai, then, so far as its religious side is concerned, is done away in Christ, and is no longer appropriate nor applicable. But the Law of Sinai, in its civil side, in its regulations for the conduct of man's relations with his fellow-man, is still appropriate, and still applicable, and I am sure that the practical application of it would be beneficial to citizenship in the world of to-day.

Of course it is easy for the well-versed Bible student to find details that are not applicable, or which do not seem to be applicable.

For example, you may pick out the laws governing the food that was allowable to the Israelite, and you may argue that by the vision shewn to Peter, in Acts x, and by the words of Jesus Himself, "Not that which entereth into a man defileth, but that which cometh out of the mouth

defileth the man." You may argue from these that the ancient law was abrogated, and that it is therefore lawful for man to eat pork, or any other food forbidden by the Law of Sinai. It is indeed so argued, but I must confess that I do not find the argument conclusive, and I am distinctly of the opinion that if the Law of Sinai were operative in this matter of food we should be a healthier people. For, be it carefully noted, Peter declares that he has never eaten anything common or unclean ; that is to say, he has never eaten anything contrary to the Mosaic food laws. Now, it is surely most provocative of thought to consider the fact that for three years at least Peter had been taking his meals with our Lord, with the very Master Whose teaching is supposed to have disposed of the law. Will not this point suggest that those who speak of the abrogation of the law have been rather hasty in their conclusions ?

It is easy to argue, too, that many of the regulations of the Law of Sinai were made for an agricultural people, and cannot apply to an industrial age. For example, how could the law of the Sabbath year apply to-day ? (Levi. xxv).

And I am willing to admit that there are very serious difficulties in the way. But I am not willing to admit that those difficulties are unsurmountable. And further, I would argue, industrialism has brought so many distressing evils in its wake, that the sooner we get back to an agricultural age, the better it will be for the land. Am I not right when I say that one of the greatest curses of to-day is that men are employed in luxury trades or in non-productive labour, whilst the land, which needs cultivating, and which, in the last resort, is the only true livelihood of man, is being more and more neglected ? Further, it must be admitted that the methods of commerce, of manufacture, of production, have led all the way along to a condition in which abundance lies side by side with starvation.

This is the aggravated situation of the present time, when there is so much production that foodstuffs in immense quantities have actually been burned, whilst at the same time thousands are left on the very verge of starvation.

There is no market for the goods which the poverty-stricken classes need. It is obvious that there is something wrong. Money has become a medium of profit instead of a medium of exchange ; consequently commerce is concerned with the making of profits, instead of with the service of mankind, whilst men are compelled to live, not on their labours, but on the profits accruing from their labours.

Well may we learn, then, that the Law of Sinai is not completely archaic, as modern teachers would have us believe. Rather is this ancient law, in its civil aspect at least, far more common-sense, far more just, far more practicable, than any modern system of law. Well may we learn that the old law did make for proper relationship, adequate distribution, and better health.

Let us see how the Bible develops its use, for, next to the Gospel of Salvation, and indeed fundamental to the Gospel of Salvation, is this Law of Sinai.

We shall all agree that the system of law under which a people lives is vital to the welfare of that people. The happiness and the progress of a people is affected for good or ill by the system of law as much as by the religion of the people—as often as not, indeed, the civil law is tied up with the religious law—as it was with Israel. Here is an illustration of what that means. The British Government in India have been trying for years to raise the age for marriage of girls. They have wanted to make 16 years the limit, and at last, after great difficulty, they have succeeded in making it 16 years. The opposition has come altogether from Hindoo and Mohammedan religious leaders, on the ground that the reform interfered with the religious law of the natives.

So you see how the happiness and progress of a people is vitally connected with the law system of that people.

Now, the Law of Sinai was given to Israel to train them for the service of God and to lead them to Christ.

What is the verdict of the New Testament upon that law ? Paul writes not only that it was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, but that it was the most commendable law

ever framed for man : "Verily if there had been a law which could have given life—righteousness would have been by the law."

Evidently, in Paul's view it was a law ideally suitable for the training of Israel, a law whose principles were so upright that, at least, it tended to pave the way for the more perfect law of liberty in Christ.

And is it not true to say that the excellence of British rule, when compared with the rule of other nations, is due to the fact that, however imperfect, however administered, it is yet built up upon exactly the same principle as that of Sinai, that is to say, it is built upon the principle of holding every man innocent till his guilt is proved ?

I am aware that it is possible to criticise the administration of the law—even in England—that sometimes there is real ground for the proverbial saying that the law is an ass ; but do not these criticisms apply to the administration and not to the law itself ? Do they not arise because even a perfect law has to be administered by imperfect men, with prejudices, and cranks, which it seems impossible to eliminate ?

We are sometimes told that justice is cold and unsympathetic. Surely it has to be, if it is to be justice, lest sympathy make men blind to actual facts ; yet because, as I have said, men are but men, mistakes and injustices will follow, and no human administration can be flawless.

On the other hand, our British rule, whether at home or abroad, will bear comparison with that of any other people, and in the comparison will far outshine every other rule.

And, consciously or unconsciously—more probably unconsciously—the principles of Sinai have entered into the soul of Britain to such an extent that our reputation for justice is recognised by those who are really most competent to judge—the so-called backward races. Here is a single illustration.

During the recent troubles in Palestine wild rumours reached the Arabs of Arabia to the effect that Jews and British were allied in an attempt to wipe out the Arabs of

Palestine and make wholesale war upon the Moslem faithful. 1,500 of them thereupon set off to fight for their brethren. The Government sent out a single police officer—Major Partridge—to hold parley with the Arabs. Why only one ? Because it was realised that to send out a force would have had the effect of convincing the Arabs that the rumours were correct. The one man was sent, and persuaded the Arabs that the rumours were not true.

The facts of the case were stated as accurately as possible, and on the word of a single Britisher the Arabs returned home.

So, though the law as we hold to to-day is not perfect ; though we have added to the Law of Sinai rules of our own invention, and though we have taken from it many things that are both useful and common sense, yet it remains the best system of law the world has known.

Indeed, you have but to ask yourselves a question or two in order to realise the truth of what I have just said.

For which of us would be willing to exchange our system for that which obtains on the Continent ? Which of us would care to see the Russian or the Mohammedan system established in place of our own. Who would prefer the principle that every man must be held guilty till he establishes his innocence.

Very well, then, let us admit that our system is better—and in admitting it, let us recognise that it is our inheritance from Sinai, an inheritance which we must share, through our direct efforts, with the other nations of the earth, until all nations come under that system of the law, which, given to Israel at Sinai by God, does of necessity express a principle in the eternal truth of God.

CHAPTER VII

THE ECONOMIC LAW OF ISRAEL

AFTER the general view of the Law of Sinai, just explained, we shall find it interesting, I think, to consider in more detail one particular section of that law.

In the book of Leviticus we shall find that the laws, touching every department of man's life, have but one aim and purpose—Holiness.

“Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy.”

It is the same principle that underlies the economic laws equally with the religious laws.

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in weight, in measure. A just balance, just measures, just weights shall ye have.” That is the law. And then comes the reason for it—“I am the Lord your God.”

It will be as well if you read the book and take note of the fact that this expression comes forty-one times in the book and always as the reason behind the law ; whilst at least thirty times are the Israelites exhorted to be holy, not only in their relationships with God, but in their relationships one with another.

There is a real interest in these chapters which we have missed because they have been almost entirely unread. And what a loss the world has suffered through this neglect.

Read the regulations for yourself. Read what the law has to say about harvesting : how a man was forbidden to reap the corners of his field or to gather the gleanings. These, says the law, are for the poor, the fatherless, the stranger.

Moreover, he had to give his first-fruits and his tenths to God. To what end ? What purpose was to be served by these rules ? Here is the answer in the Bible's own words : “Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-

fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy vats overflow with new wine."

What a great deal depends, according to this law, upon obedience to God. "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty." That is the prospect put before us in the Bible—perfect peace, perfect prosperity, "if ye walk in My statutes to do them."

Is there any justification for the ideal ?

Surely the promises of God are clear enough, and repeated sufficiently ?

Consider the law of the Sabbath. For six years the fields were to be tilled and sown, but in the seventh year they were to lie fallow. In that Sabbath year, also, all debts were to be cancelled. Whilst in the fiftieth year again there was to be no tilling or sowing, and every man was to be at liberty to return to his own possession.

This means that if a man, for any reason—his misfortune or even his fault—had sold his land, in the year of Jubilee that land was freely returned to him or to his heir. It all sounds strange to our ears, but the Bible gives its reasons.

First because the Israelites were never considered to be owners of the land. God is the Owner and Landlord, and the people were but tenants. "The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is Mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me."

Is it not fairly easy to understand a second reason for the law ? Was it not taught to them to impress upon them the idea of looking to God to supply all their need ?

We know it in theory, but we seem to have forgotten it altogether in practice. We sing our hymns to the "Giver of All," and acknowledge Him to be such with our lips, but we do not live as if we believed it.

Amidst our multiplied methods of livelihood we have wellnigh lost sight of God's hand, and we are content to lead a low life of sight, seeking to walk by sight instead of by faith.

With what result ? The result, clear enough in the story

of the world, that we pass through periods of darkness, of hard times, difficulties and distresses, which bring home to us very forcibly our own weakness and limitations.

The Bible laws were set out, not so much to give men exact regulations by which to govern their actions as to lay down clear principles, with the idea of teaching men to trust God, and thereby ensure prosperity, to the elimination of poverty. The same principle is to be observed in the laws regulating the borrowing of money and of debt. An Israelite was forbidden to exact usury of his fellow Israelite, and he was to cancel the debt in the year of the Sabbath.

How should he recover the money and avoid loss ? He was to look to God. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And this applied to money matters as much as to any other matter of justice in Israel.

There is one exception to the Sabbath law of release, and one only, that I can find. A house in a walled city could permanently change ownership. It might be redeemed by the seller within twelve months, but if not redeemed it passed, at the end of the year, into the possession of the purchaser, and so gave the only loophole provided for the foreigner to settle in Israel. But the land could not be alienated permanently from its original possessor.

Now the questions will certainly be asked :

How could these laws be worked to-day ?

How could we apply them to the present day world ?

How could business be conducted ?

How would the banks manage ?

How would the system of capital and interest on capital fare ?

The establishment of these Old Testament laws would clearly sweep away much of our present system, and drastic alterations would necessarily take effect.

Let us look well at the world as we see it and know it.

It is a world very much upside down. There is undoubtedly abundance of all those things which man needs for his material welfare and comfort. So far as the sufficiency and possibility of supplies are concerned, there

is no reason whatever why every living creature should not eat and be satisfied. Yet actually the position of many thousands is desperate, and starvation is never far from the doors of millions. We are told that there are bound to be unemployed, because there is not enough work for all. Yet it has been estimated that the earth could easily support at least twenty times its present population, if only it were properly developed. Only think of the vast spaces in our homeland, untilled, untended. Ponder on the fact that thousands of acres are going out of cultivation every year and lying unused because under our present civilisation it is not profitable to cultivate them.

There is really plenty of room for everybody, and plenty to spare. There is plenty of food for everybody, and plenty to spare. There is actually ample work for everybody, and more than ample. Not a single person need be idle. The fact of the matter is that this is a good world badly run. God made it, and man runs it. And man runs it badly because he has ignored, and remained ignorant of, God's economic laws as laid down in the Bible.

Consider this matter of the land. The Bible law was designed to prevent the accumulation of vast estates. If a farmer sold his land for any reason, it came back to him or to his heir in the year of Jubilee.

What have we done? We have allowed men to obtain hold of estates which they cannot farm themselves. They are compelled to let others take the land to till it, whilst they manage the estate. But these tenants have, of course, to pay a rent to the owner. How otherwise would he live? Consequently the land, upon which, in the final issue, man's very life depends, has a burden placed upon it which God says should not be there. And in the train of this burden, as a perfectly natural consequence, the whole system of present day finance has come into existence, by reason of which there is an ever-increasing number of workers who are not producers. They work, and their work is often more arduous than other labour, but they are not producers, and so have to live on the productive labour of others.

Socialism recognises the wrong of this burden, and suggests its remedy—Nationalisation. And the remedy is worse than the disease. For Socialism would substitute for the landed proprietor, content with his rents, a host of Government officials, with the accompaniment of destructive regulations, which would kill all enterprise. Socialism would increase, and actually has increased, the number of those who produce nothing by their labour, and so has greatly intensified the problem it set out to solve. For the larger the number of non-productive workers, the greater the burden placed upon the productive workers. That is why, as a matter of hard fact, Socialism has invariably made considerably worse the position of the worker in whose interest it is supposed to busy itself. The remedy is the application of God's law.

Again, let us consider the question of credit. Upon what does man base it? Upon a man's wealth, instead of upon his worth. Upon a nation's wealth, instead of upon its worth. And we have made the possession of gold the standard by which to measure, instead of making character the standard. That is why a blackguard, whether in the form of an individual or of a nation, finds himself often in a better position to do trade than the honest man or nation.

Does not God call to us in His laws to recognise the true values as against the false values? Why should the standard of money vary from day to day, whilst the standards of weight and measure remain constant? Taken to the last issue, is it not entirely a matter of honesty? The man who juggles with the standard of weight and measure is called a criminal, and is treated as such. The man who juggles with the standard of money, is called a financier, and is honoured in society. And so too with the nation or government. How great a need, then, for the principle, "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy."

Our country has recently gone off the gold standard; never, I devoutly pray, to return to it. When we had that standard, the notes we carried in our purses represented

gold kept in the treasury reserves of the Bank of England, and the bank could tell us that we could trust the value of the notes because of the gold reserves. Why should such a standard ever have been chosen ? Nowadays the bank has to tell us that the note depends for its value upon the honour of the British people. Which is the better standard ? Surely the second—a thousand times better ? Then why has not this standard been chosen instead of the other ? And this standard is that of the Bible. “Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy.”

We have allowed our standards to be altered and lowered by those who had no honest motives, and have accepted the person of the rogue rather than the person of the honourable man.

Now, amongst the Levitical laws none were so much emphasised as the Sabbath laws.

We are so used to teaching which confines the Sabbath law to a particular day of the week that it comes as a complete surprise to most people to hear that there is any other meaning attached to the word. Yet the Bible is clear enough about it. Ignorance on the matter can be explained, but it cannot be excused. The ignorance of the ordinary layman is due to the fact that he is content to take his teaching from his clergyman, or his religious paper, or from theological works. He does not, as a rule, take the trouble to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Scriptures, or to verify such teaching as he receives by reference to the Scriptures.

The Reformation won for us the right of private judgment ; it brought us the liberty to search out for ourselves and to read for ourselves ; it gave us the gift of the open Bible. Therefore it brought to us the responsibility of reading and acting in the Berean spirit. So we ought to read.

Will you read chapter xxv of Leviticus ? I will deliberately refrain from quoting it, in the desire that you will turn to your Bible and read for yourself. You will find in this chapter the law of the Sabbath year, and the law of the

Jubilee year. Many people try to find the Church in this chapter, and turn the regulations into a message for the Church. But does not the attempt rob the chapter of its meaning ? Here is no religious or spiritual message, in the ordinary sense in which those words are used, but an economic message, meant for a practical application to the daily life of farmers and citizens ; in particular the daily life of the farmer, upon whose labours, in the long run, mankind must live. Unless, then, these regulations be taken literally, the whole purpose and meaning is lost.

Notice verses 6 and 7, how the farmer was commanded to share the produce of the seventh year with all comers. Whatever grew, in field or on tree, was free to the poor, the stranger, to all. What a lesson in generosity, in public spirit, in kindness.

Read verses 25-28, and compare them with Deut. xv, 1, 2.

How vastly different from the theories of our Socialists. They would take away the power from the present landlords, who, whatever their faults may be, are yet approachable, and who can and do listen to complaints, and they would substitute the officials of a Government under nationalisation. Thus they would give us an unapproachable landlord, who would refuse to be touched by any plaint ; a landlord who, in the very nature of things, could not consider individual cases.

What an adept Satan is at setting up counterfeits !

God desires us to exercise faith in Him, and none shall ever suffer loss in seeking to serve Him. Therein lies, I think, the crux of the whole matter. We want to be able to see the whole road before us ere we take a step. We talk about the practicability of things, and try to think out certainties. Yet, after all, what man ever built up a great business on certainties ? What do we mean by enterprise ? What do we mean by pioneer work ? Let us answer these questions for ourselves and we shall realise how essential it is for man ever to be stepping out into the unknown ; how that faith is the very driving force of all his progress.

Then why should we hesitate to act upon the recom-

mendation, not to say the law, of the Sabbath year ? Why should we fear to put God to the test in this matter ?

Let us think about this detail ; that God has given us our Colonies to develop. There is land in these Colonies crying out for the labourer, offering abundant opportunity for the unemployed. And we shut our ears to the cry. We say that we shall want capital ; that development will cost money.

But we have wasted millions upon millions in giving men the dole, which at best is a degrading palliative, when every honest man wants work. Why are we so slow ? Why do we lack faith ? Why have Australia and Canada and Africa their own unemployment problems, when there is work waiting to be done ? Why have we allowed men to crowd into the city, where there is no work to be had, instead of setting them on to the land ? One answer is adequate to all these questions—we have abandoned God's wise laws and persisted in our own foolish ones.

But what should we do with the Sabbath year ? queries some critic. We should do with it just what God commands in His law. We should spend it as a time of national education. Surely that is by no means an unnecessary or Utopian ideal, but a very sound and sensible recommendation well worth realisation.

And again, of what value is the Jubilee year ? It was, and it could be again, a year of liberty and restoration.

In a sense, every fiftieth year would see a bloodless and orderly revolution, when the whole nation would make a new start. Had a man been compelled to sell, finding no one to act as kinsman ? He returned in the Jubilee to his possession, and received a new gift of inheritance. Every exile was able to return home, and begin life again amidst the old associations and without encumbrances. Consequently, the man who through misfortune, or temperamental difficulties, or smaller opportunities, or lesser gifts, had been left behind in the race, was able to catch up to his more fortunate brethren. He was not allowed, in God's way of ordering matters, to fall permanently behind, nor to suffer a perpetual handicap.

Even the man who had fallen behind through his own fault, even he had his chance again.

We, with our vaunted wisdom, and exceeding cleverness, not only determine permanently to handicap a man, but we see to it that his children are handicapped also. Then, when our folly has led us into a veritable quagmire of economic difficulties, we spend millions in making frantic efforts to correct our mistakes, and usually succeed only in making matters worse.

Would any man wish to protest that his greater gifts, or better used talents and opportunities ought to bring him a greater reward and keep him permanently ahead ? I will answer, first, that his talents will put him ahead for long enough ; and second, that to have enough is surely sufficient for any man. If a man's labour has brought him an adequate reward, so that there is full provision for himself and those that are dependent on him, to the end that neither he nor they lack anything that is good or necessary, what ever more could he honestly desire ? Why should any man want more than enough ? And why should any man's success mean that his children live in idleness ?

We may be sure that when God's will is done on earth, as it is done in heaven, men will have such social privileges, and such adequate temporal provision, as will make life altogether blessed. And is not that enough ?

It is what God has promised to the nation that will keep His laws.

Let us see to it that we labour to restore these Levitical laws of economy in Israel.

CHAPTER VIII

ISRAEL'S HIGH PRIEST

THE story of Israel's Exodus from Egypt is one that is fairly familiar to most people, even in these days, when the Old Testament is discounted, and the Bible largely unread. But however well you may know it, I intend to go over the chief details of it, for the significance of it is certainly not well known, nor is it appreciated, even by many teachers and theologians.

We are told in the Scriptures that Jacob went down into Egypt with his family, leaving Canaan in a time of famine. There in Egypt he found his son Joseph, whom he had mourned for dead for twenty-two years. There, too, he and his family remained, prospering under the protection of a dynasty of friendly Pharaohs for some years. We are not told how long this protection lasted, but we are informed that after a time this friendly line of kings came to an end, and that another dynasty arose which knew not Joseph, with the consequence that the friendship towards Israel ceased, giving place to an oppression. In spite of the oppression Israel increased in numbers, and at length there rose up a leader, Moses, who organised the Exodus, or departure of Israel from Egypt.

We are told that the work of Moses was set afoot and controlled by Jehovah; that out in the wilderness God revealed Himself to Moses as the One Who had made Covenant with the forefathers of Israel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Let me pause to point out that this Bible statement is fundamentally reasonable. For, except God did reveal Himself, man would have no means of ever comprehending God.

This is a definite truth, however anxious any may be to dispute it. We live in an age that prides itself on its powers and its intelligence, and the common impression is that religion is the search of God by man. The Bible puts the matter exactly the other way round, and declares that religion is the search of man by God. And this view is, I maintain, the reasonable one. Man, by his own unaided efforts, cannot find God, nor learn the truth about God, no matter how earnestly he may seek. How can a finite mind comprehend that which is essentially infinite? Why, man cannot properly comprehend himself; how much less, then, his Maker? Man can only know the truth about God in so far as God has chosen to reveal Himself.

Inspired, then, by revelation, Moses organised the Exodus of Israel, moving at each point under the direct command and instruction of Jehovah. You may note for yourself the fact that the expressions: "The Lord commanded Moses" and "The Lord spake unto Moses" come no fewer than 275 times in the three Books, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers.

I need not detail to you the lengthy controversy with Pharaoh, but I would like to draw your attention to a statement of the eminent surgeon, Lord Moynihan, that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, upon which the Bible account turns, is a medical and scientific detail which has been proved by an examination of the heart.

How strange, and yet how interesting, do these modern discoveries prove. When I was a lad the critics were hotly engaged in proving, entirely to their own satisfaction, that the Pharaoh of the Oppression never existed. I remember an Anglican bishop preaching in our home church (it made an impression on the mind of a boy, for bishops *were* bishops in those days; they were not as numerous nor so lightly esteemed, as in this present age), and telling us that it was doubtful whether the Israelites were ever in Egypt. Then the body of the Pharaoh was found, and the wiseacres confounded. Now it is even suggested that there is a sound medical proof of the hardening process of the heart.

There is one detail of the plagues, however, that is of importance to our present study : the slaying of the first-born, and the establishment of the Feast of the Passover.

The Passover Feast is still kept by one small portion of Israel—the portion that we call the Jews—and though it is not kept strictly in accordance with the letter of the law, and has, moreover, ceased to have any real meaning since the Death of Jesus Christ, yet the very commemoration of the Feast is a proof that the Bible account of its institution is worthy of our attention and study.

In that Passover Feast you will find what we may call the great Bible doctrine of "Substitution," which declares that God is willing, in order to forgive us our sins, to accept a substitute as a sufferer in our stead.

In the Passover judgment was passed upon the firstborn, but so far as Israel was concerned, and her families, the sacrifice of a lamb was accepted as a substitute, and the angel of death passed over the dwelling where the substitute had been offered. I am not going to enter into any argument now about the philosophy or morality of this substitutional theory. I shall do that when I come to the question of the Atonement. I simply want to state at the moment that the theory is a Bible doctrine. Any denial of it involves a denial of Bible teaching. Refusal to believe the doctrine means a refusal to accept the plain statements of Scripture.

I also ask you to notice that the Passover, like the Holy Communion that was instituted at the Passover, was, according to Bible statements, an evening meal, celebrated in the evening. The Mass of the Roman Church, the Orthodox Church, and of the High Anglican, has very little, if anything, in common with either the Passover or the Holy Communion ; is indeed almost entirely different in its essentials from both the Old Testament and New Testament feasts. Will you recall the Bible fact that the Passover was a family affair, celebrated in the first instance before the priesthood was commissioned ? The one responsible for the whole detail of the feast was the head of the household.

That is a fact that is full of the deepest significance, and yet it is frequently entirely ignored by exponents of "Eucharistic Doctrine."

Now, by means of the Passover and the immediate departure of Israel from Egypt, Israel became a redeemed people.

I have a letter before me, already referred to in a previous chapter, written by an Anglican vicar, a devout Evangelical and a Doctor of Divinity. In it he seeks to destroy my British-Israel position by making the statement that there is no such thing in the Bible as "National Redemption." Is not that statement almost too amazing for credence? Would not a child in the bottom standard of a Church elementary school be able to correct this learned doctor? Surely we have all known, ever since we were little children, this story of Israel's National Redemption from the house of bondage?

We have here, then, a vital point, which needs emphasis and explanation. It needs emphasis because it is stated so definitely in the Bible. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine" (Isa. xliii, 1). And this is but one of 82 occasions in the prophets when Israel is called a redeemed people. Further, the people of Israel is frequently called "the congregation of the Lord." It is clear, therefore, from the Bible, that Israel was delivered from bondage in accordance with the faithful promises of Almighty God to Abraham, in order that they might be a separated people, to be used for the purposes of God throughout the world.

Let us make quite sure that we thoroughly understand this point. For herein is no suggestion or idea of "favouritism." The Bible thought is entirely one of choice for service, redemption for the witness of God.

So you find a promise of priesthood made to the whole nation: "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests."

May I draw your attention to the fact that the word "priest" has a much wider meaning in the pages of the Bible than the one given to it in common speech to-day.

We limit the word to a particular office in the ministry of the Church, and consider that the work of the priest is concerned with "spiritual things" only. But a careful reading of the book of Leviticus will shew us that the work of the Levitical priesthood was concerned with the administration of the law, with medicine, with education, and with social order, as well as with the service of the Tabernacle. Indeed, only one family of the tribe of Levi had any actual responsibility for the *sacrifices* of Israel. Consequently, when Israel was separated to become a kingdom of priests her work was much wider than that which we are accustomed to call "religious." Israel was to function in the world, in relationship to the peoples of the world, in just the same way that the tribe of Levi was intended to minister to the other twelve tribes.

Such works as are familiar to those who have studied British administration of recent years come directly under the Bible heading of priestly functions. I would draw your attention, in order to illustrate this Bible point, to British rule in India. And I choose India because that part of our Empire looms very largely in the public eye to-day, and because many people listen to the nonsense poured out to a gullible public by Gandhi and other members of the so-called Indian National Congress. As a matter of hard fact, such a thing as the Indian nation does not exist. The story of the country called India, before the British took control, about eighty years ago, is a story of perpetual strife, of frequent conquests by races from the north-west, of persistent famine and disease, and of the most abominable religious customs. Such customs as "suttee," the burning alive of the man's widow on his funeral pyre, child marriage, slavery, infant widowhood, were all part of the very life of India—bound up with India's religions.

There are records of as many as a thousand women being burned at a Rajah's funeral. Even to-day, in spite of every care and vigilance, the authorities have their suspicions that suttee takes place occasionally in remote parts of the country. But British rule has so vastly improved condi-

tions, and has so drastically controlled matters, that the practice has almost ceased. But let us make no mistake about this. It has not ceased through the conversion of India to Christianity. Neither has it ceased through the advance of education.

We ought to realise, for the facts are plain enough to be read, that it is possible for education to go hand in hand with both superstition and brutality. It is an almost unpardonable mistake to imagine that education necessarily is an uplifting force. Frequently it sharpens the intellect, and makes men into clever devils, whose powers of harm are multiplied just because they have been educated. Some of the evils of India have been overcome, and other evils distinctly modified, because of British power and authority, and because of that alone. If the British were to withdraw from India, suttee and head-hunting and thugging would break out again immediately. All control in India would go. Hindoo and Mohammedan would war one against the other, without let or hindrance, and the old confusion and misery of India would return, with its constant famines and diseases. There can be no disputing of these things. The man who denies them does but immediately prove his ignorance of facts. When Gandhi, writing to the *Daily Mail*,* declared that British rule in India had meant progressive poverty for India, he not only wrote what was not true, but he must have known it was not true when he wrote it.

A very short consideration of the facts of the case will shew anyone who wishes to know, what India owes to British rule, and will thus teach him what the Bible means by the priesthood of a nation.

Or you may take another instance: the work of the British in the Sudan, teaching the natives farming and other useful methods of earning an honest living, so that in less than forty years the Sudanese have been transformed from a crowd of savage tribes, constantly engaged in warfare, into a settled community of peaceful and industrious citizens.

* *Daily Mail*, Thurs., Sept. 17th, 1931.

So, I repeat, in British rule is seen a clear indication of the true meaning of the priesthood of Israel.

Now, at the very beginning of Israel's history as a redeemed people, as a kingdom of priests, there was given to them the Law of Sinai to train them. Though they were a redeemed people they were very far from being perfect. How strange it is that so many should speak of redemption and salvation as if each expression denoted the making of one perfect. Redemption is the first step in a process, and the grace of God is needed to carry on the good work thus begun. Therefore, by reason of the sinfulness which is common to man Israel was unfit to serve God. Redemption had set her on the right road, had given her the start ; but training was needed, grace was needed to keep her on the road. We read in the historical books of the Bible of the constant murmurings and rebellions, of the repeated breaking of those Covenant conditions laid down by God for Israel's prosperity and peaceful occupation of Palestine. Indeed, so badly did Israel fail . . . probably because *she* thought that redemption made her safe for ever . . . that her disobedience caused the captivities and dispersal, first of Israel and then of Judah : a punishment at God's hands which kept them low and feeble for many centuries, until the period of punishment came to an end. Israel's period has run out, but Judah still has a short portion of her time to run.

But let us be sure about this, for it is plainly enough taught in the Scriptures, that though Israel did fail through sin, the idea of Israel's service and usefulness to God never fades from Scripture.

We read in Leviticus xxv, 55 : "Unto Me are the children of Israel servants. They are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt." And centuries after, when both Israel and Judah had been punished for sin, Nehemiah calls them God's servants, and 28 times in the prophets are they called God's servants. This is, I think, a most important point.

I have been reading a pamphlet by a Mr. G. Goodman, of

Tunbridge Wells, entitled "British Israel Weighed in the Balances." The chief arguments he uses are : That there is no distinction made in the Bible between Israel and Judah ; That all the Twelve Tribes returned under Ezra and Nehemiah ; That Britain is not under the New Covenant.

I will not take the trouble now to repeat what I have already declared on the first and second points, except to say that I wrote to Mr. Goodman, offering to give up my whole case for British-Israel if he could give me Scriptural proof for his statements, and his reply to me was that he would have nothing to do with a servant of the devil.

But consider the third point. Why does he argue that Britain is not under the New Covenant ? Because, he says, every one in Britain is not "born again."

Now, surely that is a most extraordinary point of view to be advanced by any student of the Bible ? Israel was a redeemed people ; called such both in Old and New Testaments ; a people baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ; a people that did all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink ; and yet we read, "Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased." "WITH MOST OF THEM."

Is it not perfectly clear, to anyone reading with intelligence, that there is all the difference in the world between redemption and perfection, between salvation and sanctification ? Israel was redeemed, but Israel needed training. Israel was redeemed, but Israel needed a priesthood of her own before she could be fitted for her priesthood to the world. So God chose out a tribe from Israel to make that tribe His special servant to Israel, so that Israel might learn what was required of her in service to the world. And it makes no difference whatever to the Bible statements on this matter to argue that both the Levitical priesthood and the Israel priesthood failed in Old Testament times. We know they did. The Bible itself declares their failure. The Bible itself shews the rejection of the Levitical priesthood, and the reduction of Levi to the level of the lowest tribe. But these things do not affect the fact that both Israel and

Levi WERE chosen for service. Nor does Levi's failure and rejection involve the rejection of Israel, for in the very day of Israel's failure the promise of servanthship is *renewed* in stronger and more striking words than those which were first used.

It is important to remember all through that we are dealing with affairs of God's choice. "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God."

We may easily understand from Exodus xxxii, 26, *why* Levi was chosen, but none the less, the choice was God's.

The next detail for us to notice is that the tribe of Levi was divided into three sections, each of which had its definite tasks appointed by the direct commandment of God to Moses. The unbeliever may doubt, if he so wishes, whether these words were ever spoken to Moses by God. He may declare, if he wishes, that Moses acted entirely on his own responsibility. What he cannot deny is the fact that the Bible sets out the case as I have declared, and the words are simple enough for all to read and understand. It is for the doubter to prove his case, not for us to prove ours. No fewer than 115 times does the expression come: "As the Lord commanded Moses."

Therefore the Bible makes it abundantly clear that the choice and training of Israel, the choice and training of Levi, and the choice and training of the family of Aaron, was all part of the determinate counsel of God. According to the Bible, it was no human design, no human philosophy, no human scheme, but altogether God's.

The main body of the Levites ministered amongst the people in the capacity of teachers and lawyers, and in the outer courtyard of the Tabernacle. A second and much smaller section ministered as the doctors of Israel, and in the Tabernacle itself. But only the High Priest, Aaron in the first instance, and a direct descendant of Aaron afterwards, was allowed to enter the innermost Sanctuary, the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. Moreover, he was limited in his ministry of this Sanctuary to one day of the year.

The main idea of Aaron's priesthood was that of representation. He was there, not so much to minister to Israel as to represent Israel. But like every other man born into the world, Aaron had his faults, his limitations, his sins. He needed pardon as much as any other in Israel. He needed grace as much as any other. So God provided a way for Aaron, by means of the symbolic garments, which He commanded to be made for, and to be worn by, the High Priest.

These garments were intended to be a type, both of Christ and of Israel. The beauty and the glory was in the garments, and not in Aaron, and they symbolised his need, not his power, bringing home to him, and to the people he represented, the fact that neither he nor they could serve God without God's grace.

Let me detail the garments worn by the High Priest, and try to shew you something of their symbolic meaning.

There was first of all a long white robe, reaching down to the feet. "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness," sang the Psalmist. And there can be no question that the first essential of the priest is righteousness. But righteousness is not possible for any man except through God and God's grace. May I remind you of the parable which mentions the man who had not on a wedding garment? What was his fault? He had entered the guest chamber in his own garments, despising or rejecting the one offered by his host. In ancient Oriental functions it was the custom for the host to supply garments for his guests, so that none could boast himself against another, and none need refuse the invitation for lack of a decent garment in which to attend. But to refuse the proffered garment was an insult to the host that was deemed unpardonable. It is this custom which our Lord uses in order to emphasise the lesson that we must derive our righteousness from Him. Thus, any suggestion of favouritism in the choice of Aaron, or in the choice of Israel, is ruled out. "How can Britain be Israel?" asks our opponent. "Is not this suggestion of national favour and superiority to be seriously deprecated?" Let the opponent

read the Bible, and he will read there, clearly enough, if he so wishes, that any grace Israel had or has, like any grace that the High Priest had, was God's, not his own.

Second, round the waist of this white linen robe was worn a girdle, always a type of service. We are all familiar, I should think, with the Bible expression, "girding up the loins." The girdle holds up the long garments and so gives freedom of action to the legs. Hence the girded priest would be one prepared for the active service of God. And here again we have an answer to our opponents, for Israel's choice, like the choice of Israel's High Priest, was altogether for service. And it is a happy thing to find this idea of service accepted by the British Government. Here are two instances, taken from the daily paper at the time of writing. One concerns India, where the Government has been establishing co-operative village banks, for the help of the peasant, to rescue him from the grip of the moneylender, who, as one of the native institutions of India, has been the cause of untold poverty. In almost numberless cases, small farmers have been in the power of the moneylender for generations, for, by the custom of India, the debt is not cancelled by death, but passes from father to son, both in the instance of the borrower and in the instance of the lender.

The financial burden of establishing the banks is to be borne by the Government.

The second instance concerns the Cameroons, part of what was formerly German West Africa, and which is now under our care. This small territory, according to the official report presented to the League of Nations, has cost the British taxpayer over £440,000 already. The Government official who presented the report said that it would not be allowed to fall as a burden upon the inhabitants of the Cameroons, but would be a sacrifice which Great Britain considered it a privilege to make in the cause of civilisation.

To come back, after these illustrations, to further details of the robes, we may note that over the long white robe there was a short one of blue linen, upon the bottom hem of

which was a fringe of alternate bells and pomegranates. The blue, the heavenly colour, bespoke a ministry, a priesthood, that was definitely connected with the Kingdom of Heaven, which Kingdom had its beginning at Sinai, and has its consummation at the Second Coming of our Lord. The bells, sounding wherever he moved, were meant to be a constant reminder to the High Priest that he moved in the service of the Lord, and that reverence was ever necessary. The pomegranates denoted fruitfulness, and so are a symbol of two things. First, Israel's requisite fruitfulness. "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit." Second, of the necessity for the fruit of good works to be found in the life of the High Priest.

Then we must note the breastplate, with its twelve diverse precious stones, each bearing a name of a tribe of Israel. When the High Priest went about his work, he carried, as it were, all Israel with him, and so in the holiness of the High Priest, and in his office, is represented the holiness and office of all Israel.

Finally, on his head he wore a white linen turban, and on the front of it a gold plate inscribed "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." Thus was the High Priest Israel's representative, and the burden of the whole nation was upon him.

Now, what was the purpose filled by Aaron and the priesthood, in God's work for the world ?

You will find the answer to this question, and the whole symbolism of Exodus explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews. One may truly call this Epistle God's own commentary on His Law of Sinai.

Now the peculiarity of the Old Covenant was this, that it was a National Covenant. The Law of Moses, containing the regulations for Israel's worship, was absolutely and essentially a national religion, and as such was binding upon the whole nation. So clearly and definitely is this idea expressed in the Old Testament, that it becomes a plain fact that any Israelite turning idolater turned himself out of the Congregation of Israel. You will find this expression frequently used in the Old Testament : "That soul shall be cut

off from Israel." This idea of nationality in religion runs right through the prophets, as well as through the historical books.

The Messiah, even when foreshadowed as a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," is still idealised as the King of Israel, and the prophets speak of Him as such. Further, when that Messiah came the first time He came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom ; and He comes again to take the Throne of David and to reign over the House of Jacob for ever. His was a National Message, and when the nation directly addressed, the Jewish nation, the remnants of the Two-Tribed Kingdom, refused this National Message, the Messiah spake thus to them : "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a NATION bringing forth the fruits thereof."

In a Higher Critical Commentary on "Hebrews" there are these words : "There cannot be, there must not be, nationality in religion," and the writer argues that Christianity and the religion of the New Testament is entirely and essentially for the individual. Now, whilst the Salvation that is in Christ is offered to individuals . . . let us be quite clear about that . . . the message of the New Testament, like the message of the Old Testament, is a NATIONAL MESSAGE. There must be nationality in religion, for the Bible sufficiently declares it.

The author of the commentary I have just quoted says that it was the national idea in religion that spoiled the spiritual life and work of Israel. It was no such thing, as any truly intelligent reader can observe for himself. It was their IDOLATRY that spoiled their life and work. They turned to idols, and forgot that as a nation they were called upon to witness for God. And it was because they forgot this that they were removed as a nation out of God's sight. Those are Bible facts, as clear as daylight, I say, to any intelligent reader. God's call was to the NATION, quite as much as, if not far more than, to the individual, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews this national call is renewed and emphasised.

At the end of Chapter viii there is quoted that very beautiful prophecy of Jeremiah xxxi, 81, ff. Does not this make it quite plain that the New Covenant is still a National Covenant like the Old? If any man can read individualism into those words, is it not evident that he does not understand the meaning of the King's English?

And this national ideal is taught in the most striking way in the Israel priesthood.

Ministering in the midst of the Nation Israel in ancient times was Aaron, or one of his direct line. Let it be carefully noted that the priesthood was absolutely vested in the line of Aaron. No other family might ever intrude into the priestly office. Surely the reason for this was that Israel, as a nation, was under the rule of God as King, and in a kingdom properly administered, the rule of heredity always holds good. The priests in Israel were vice-regents for God.

The Epistle to the Hebrews has a great deal to say about this Aaronic priesthood, its purposes, its limitations, its weakness, its failure to make men perfect; and in this way the inspired author leads us on to an historic and spiritual fact of the utmost importance, which is this: Christ is our High Priest, but he is not a Priest in the line of Aaron. Jesus Christ is of the House of David, of the Tribe of Judah. He is a Priest says this Epistle several times, "after the order of Melchizedek." So the great and outstanding fact is that there was a change of the priesthood, due not merely to the failure of the Aaronic priesthood, but to the fact that the Aaronic priesthood had run its full course of purpose when Christ came and offered Himself for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the world. What is the significance of the phrase, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"?

Go back to Genesis xiv, and you will learn that Melchizedek was king and priest of Salem. His name means King of Righteousness, and his title means King of Peace. He is spoken of as a pattern of Jesus Christ, and he is such because Christ our High Priest is supreme King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

Again, in Zechariah vi, the prophet speaks of the Messiah as a priest upon His throne. This great High Priest is therefore King, and being a King, King of Israel, His message becomes of clear necessity, a NATIONAL MESSAGE. For a king without a country, without a nation, and without a national objective is a king in name only, powerless and vain.

Christ, then, the King, the Anointed One, is also High Priest. Now, the special work of the High Priest of Israel and his particular privilege was to enter into the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle, having laid aside his richly embroidered robes, in order to make an atonement for Israel and himself. So, too, our Lord Jesus Christ, having laid aside His glory, humbled Himself and made an atonement on Calvary ; an atonement that was at once the ground of the redemption of the Nation Israel, and of every individual inside or outside Israel who believes on the Lord Jesus. There is this difference, however. The High Priest of Israel, the prototype, entered the sanctuary every year, repeating the same ritual, making the same sacrifices. But Christ our true High Priest suffered but once. He was the victim once and once for all, as is so emphatically written in this epistle.

Let us thank God for this truth, that Christ, our High Priest, is all-sufficient. If Calvary were not complete in itself, then Christ could not be our High Priest, and His mission was a failure. He cannot come again to suffer again.

No, He comes the second time to reign. Nor will that coming be long delayed, and His coming will mean redemption and salvation indeed, for He is an Eternal Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, and His reign on earth will truly be the reign of the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace.

CHAPTER IX

THE TABERNACLE

THE Old Testament Scriptures ought to be very precious to us, if only for the fact that they were the Scriptures which Jesus Christ used and loved. And in those Scriptures the chapters which deal with the Tabernacle ought to find some definite place in our prayerful study and interest. It is noteworthy that whilst but two chapters in Genesis are devoted to the account of all creation, sixteen are used to tell us the story of the making of the Tabernacle.

Yet I suppose it would be true to say that very little is known to-day about the Tabernacle ; and if any do give it a thought, it is rather a mere matter of ancient manners and customs than of a lesson in God's ways of grace and mercy in redemption. On the other hand, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews thought the story of the Tabernacle well worth telling, not only because it does tell us of God's ways in redemption, but because it holds such clear proof of the claims of Jesus Christ. And therefore to the true Bible lover, who does believe in inspiration, every part of the Tabernacle has a meaning. Whilst to the doubter and the unbeliever I would say that the Tabernacle, both in its form and in its services, provides a prophetic proof of Christ and Christianity that is scarcely controvertible. It provides in very truth, "a shadow of good things to come," and just as there can be no shadow without both a light and material substance to cast the shadow, so there could have been no Tabernacle without God and Christ as the very background of the Tabernacle. Now, in Romans ix, 4, 5, there is a very definite statement about the choice of Israel. The word of the Lord came first to them. To them were entrusted those divine communica-

tions by which God's "saving health" was to be made known amongst the nations. It was their peculiar advantage and privilege above all nations, and one which brought a correspondingly great responsibility. "He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." "He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and ordinances unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for His judgments they have not known them." These quotations are from the Psalms, and so when you read Rom. ix, 4, you realise that the New Testament agrees with the Old in declaring the choice of Israel to be a peculiar treasure for God's service in the world. And it makes no difference whatever whether you accept the Bible as true or not; the words are there, and cannot be gainsaid.

I do not forget that everything that is good and true in the world is due to the inspiration of God, and I know that God hath not left Himself without witness in the other nations; but none the less it is undeniably stated in the Bible, and is therefore to be received as correct by every Christian, that Israel stands out amongst the nations as the elect of God, and that to them were committed the oracles of God and the task of bearing witness. Everything, therefore, that we know with certainty about God, about His nature, His service, His purposes, we derive from Scripture through the ministry, in the first place, of Israel. I say, everything that we know with *certainty*. There are many religions which teach many things about God; there are many individuals who have their own ideas about God; there are many expressions of opinion within the ranks of the Church. But all these ideas, doctrines, and impressions belong to the realm of conjecture and guesswork. In the Bible we have certainty; nothing conjectural, nothing in the nature of guesswork; but certainty, clear and definite. And that certainty is wrapped up in the history of Israel, a history which it is quite impossible for the critic or the unbeliever to override.

Let us, however, be quite clear in our minds as to the

meaning of the word "Israel." There are some who read Romans ix, 7, and argue from these words that the actual nation Israel is not meant, but rather some "spiritual Israel," the Church. But let us examine more carefully than the average theologian these words of Paul, and let us be above prejudice and pre-conception. He says that there are some "of Israel" who are "not Israel"; some seed of Abraham who are not children.

What does he mean? In the matter of Abraham, it is easy enough for anyone to see what is meant, if he will but go to the trouble of reading Genesis. Abraham had other sons beside Isaac. Isaac is the son of promise. The others were the seed of Abraham, but they were not "children" so far as the Covenant was concerned. And Paul is dealing with matters pertaining to the Covenant. He is not, as is fondly supposed, setting aside Israel, the national seed of Abraham, in order to find place for the Church. He is setting aside the seed of Ishmael and of the sons of Keturah, to make room for Israel, the children of Isaac, the son of promise. So too, Jacob, not Esau, was the child of the Covenant. Esau was of the seed of Abraham and Isaac, but the Covenant blessings were not to be conveyed through him. Israel, therefore, in the New Testament, as in the Old, must mean National Israel and can mean nothing else. The Tabernacle in the wilderness, set up amidst the dwellings of Jacob, and surrounded by the tents of Israel, was the witness to Israel, the constant reminder to them, that they were the people of the Lord.

Over the Tabernacle rested the shekinah, the pillar of fire by night, and of cloud by day, the sign and symbol of the Kingship of Jehovah over Israel; and of His presence with them. Consequently the story of the Tabernacle is closely bound up with the whole history and prophecy of Israel, and becomes of great historic and religious value to the British.

For it was not only the Sanctuary of God in the midst of His people, the centre of worship, but it was also a prophecy, having a direct bearing upon the future of Israel.

Turn for a moment to Ezek. xxxvii, 26 ff. Who can help seeing in that prophecy a reference to the former days, when the shekinah glory rested over Israel? And who can fail to see the promise of the renewal of the intimacy between God and His people? Or turn to Rev. xxi, 3, and do you not see that it is still the same theme? Or turn back to Ezek. xlvi, and in those last verses, where the new camp of Israel is described, you will find the culmination of the whole prophecy in the last two words—"Jehovah Shammah." Jehovah's abiding presence with His people, an ideal and topic that is the chief teaching of the Tabernacle.

Again. Upon a gold-covered table in the Tabernacle were placed, week by week, twelve loaves, known as the shewbread, sprinkled with frankincense. This weekly offering was meant—was it not?—not only to prefigure Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, but also to foreshadow that happy day when Israel's twelve tribes should be joined together as one people under the balm of God's blessing, when they shall worship Jehovah together in the beauty of holiness. In that day they shall be known amongst the nations, and all that see them shall acknowledge that they are the people whom the Lord hath blessed.

For no careful student of the Bible can fail to see that the original unity and order of Israel was broken through sin, and that the breach became so marked on the death of Solomon that two rival kingdoms were formed. Distinct and separate histories and prophecies are written about the two families thus divided, and their re-union under the rule of Christ, with the accompanying presence of God, is one of the last of the prophecies to be fulfilled.

The twofold importance of the Tabernacle is emphasised in a most striking way in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In that most useful commentary on Israel's worship it is the Tabernacle and its services that are discussed and used for teaching, and they are used to prove the truth of Christ and Christianity. May I stress that point by a reference to an historical fact? When this Epistle was written the Temple

was still standing, as is evident from x, 11 ; for sacrifices were made in the Temple only, not in the synagogues. But the writer ignores the Temple, probably because it had become the symbol and expression of a dead Judaism, a lifeless and meaningless creed. He ignores this Temple, and goes back for the basis of his teaching and argument to the days when Israel's worship was fresh and pure, and he builds up his case for Christ upon the Tabernacle and its witness.

It was on Mount Sinai that Moses received the command to build the Tabernacle, and received the details for the construction. These commands were given at the same time as the Law, and therefore the two have a connection, and they both rest upon the same Divine authority.

It is very worthy of note that Moses was not left, except, apparently in one instance, to his own ideas and devices. Everything was detailed to him by the Divine command, with the single exception of the brazen laver, to which I will refer later. The Tabernacle was God's resting place, and He was His own architect, deciding all the constructional details.

Four times is Moses warned to make all things according to the pattern shewn to him on the mount. So Moses had behind him for everything he said or did a "thus saith the Lord." At least 250 times in the three Books of the Law does this expression, and the kindred one, "as the Lord commanded Moses," come in the text.

Now, had you been a stranger, approaching the camp of Israel in the wilderness, you would have been struck first of all, I think, by the orderliness. To use a well-worn phrase, a place for everything, and everything in its place. And that is a most eloquent testimony to the Divine inspiration of the whole scheme of things. There was Israel, an unruly rabble of slaves, half demoralised by the tragedy of the Egyptian bondage, and very ready on any occasion to rebel against the authority of Moses. Yet at Mount Sinai, and in the days that followed, they were brought to a definite order through the law and the Tabernacle.

Had you seen the camp, you would have noted the main details quite easily. Right in the very centre of the camp, plainly to be seen because of the shekinah overhanging it, was the Tabernacle itself. On the east side of it were pitched the tents of Moses and Aaron, and those of the Levites were on the three other sides, in a definite arrangement, according to families. Then, further away, three tribes on each side, were ranged the tents of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

Each tribe had its place allotted by God, and neither Moses nor any other man was allowed any discretion in the arrangement. The Divine order and guidance is also noticed in that the movement of the camp was made dependent upon the movement of the shekinah.

It may be remarked that we do not read of the shekinah after Israel had settled in Palestine, until the dedication of the Temple by Solomon. Nehemiah tells us that the glory was ever with Israel in the wilderness, but it may have been given to Israel only as a guide for the wilderness journeys.

It is more likely, however, that Israel forfeited this symbol of God's kingship and presence, through sin, when they first asked for, and received a king like unto the kings of other nations. It should not be forgotten that Ezekiel speaks of himself as having seen the shekinah moving away from Jerusalem in the days of Judah's apostacy, and he foretells the return when God once again dwells amongst His people.

It will not be at all uninteresting if we consider some of the details and measurements of the Tabernacle.

The outer court, made simply by hanging white curtains upon 60 pillars of shittim wood, was 100 cubits long, by 50 cubits broad ; approximately 240 feet, by 120 feet. In size, then, even the courtyard was comparatively insignificant ; but this is not in the least surprising, when one remembers that the first use of this Israelitish centre of worship was with a people moving from place to place.

There was but one gateway to this courtyard, situated on the east side, and it was marked by curtains which were

embroidered in the three colours, scarlet, blue, and purple, which come constantly into the Tabernacle scheme of decoration.

It is significant that there was also but one entrance into the Tabernacle itself, surely pointing out the lesson that God has left no room for human choice in the matter of salvation, but has ordained one way, and one way only. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. None cometh to the Father but by Me." "In none other is there salvation : for neither is there any other Name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

Within the courtyard were two objects made of wood covered over with brass. The first, and in many respects the most important article of the furniture of the Tabernacle was the brazen altar, 5 cubits, by 5, by 3.

At this altar were offered all the sacrifices of Israel, and these sacrifices, of various types, were all symbolic of the life and work of the coming Messiah of Israel.

Second was the brazen laver, where the officiating priest washed, both before and after ministering at the altar.

Of this laver we have no details as to size or shape, and this is the more remarkable when we recall that such exact details are given of all else. What is the reason for this exception ? We can but guess at the reason, but we may not be very far wrong when we recollect two things. First, that it was made of the gifts of the women, from their brazen mirrors.

Now, the religion of the Bible is the only religion which has found any use for women, except an immoral use. The priestesses of heathenism were women who deemed that the greatest sacrifice they could make to the gods was that of their own chastity. But both Old and New Testament find a pure and proper place for womanhood, and the Old Testament Law was specially designed in many of its enactments for the benefit of womanhood. The size, then, of the laver, may have depended entirely upon the extent to which Israel's womanhood had grasped its opportunities and understood its unique privilege. Or it may serve to

emphasise the boundless influence of womanhood in the affairs of the world.

Or, again, being made of the brazen mirrors, it has some significance, for a mirror is that in which we see ourselves. And to see ourselves properly is to recognise our own sinfulness and our need of cleansing. We are made clean, the Bible tells us, through the washing of regeneration, through Christ. And the lack of detail may serve to make clear both our unbounded need, and the unbounded grace and power of Christ to save.

The Tabernacle itself, standing, not in the centre of the court, but two-thirds of the way between the eastern and western sides, was quite a beautiful and costly structure, in spite of being a movable tent.

Seen from the outside, with its dark covering of badger skins, it may have had little attraction for the human eye, but the interior was most beautiful and inspiring. One is reminded, and quite legitimately, of the words of Isaiah : "He hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him." But to those who have found in Him a Saviour, how great is the beauty and glory of His presence.

And in a lesser degree, this somewhat drab external view of the Tabernacle is typical of both ancient and modern Israel. Ancient Israel was a company of slaves ; not very promising material for so great a work as that which God purposed for the world. Whilst one of the complaints made against modern Israel by foreigners is that "the British have no polish." "Take a Goth, a Hun, and a Barbary Rover, mix them together, then take this creature and make him drunk, and you have an Englishman." Not a very complimentary estimate, and not a very correct one.

But we know, without flattery or boasting, that underneath the rough exterior, which is rather characteristic of the British people, there is a genuineness that is too often missing in the foreigner. There may be a great bluntness about John Bull, but he does pay his debts and honour his bond ; whilst, however charming the manners of his French

neighbour may be, a greater readiness to recognise his obligations would make him more charming.

I think, too, whilst viewing the humble exterior of the Tabernacle, that the present generation of Churchmen might well take a lesson from it. There is so great a desire to make church-going attractive nowadays. Services must be brightened, and young folk encouraged to come with their tennis racquets and their football boots. Popular sermons on popular subjects must be preached. Dogma must be avoided, and anything in the nature of narrowness is taboo. Let truth give way to expediency, and the pure worship of God to the spending of a pleasant Sunday afternoon. Anything for brightness.

The Tabernacle offered no such attractions, for it placed duty before pleasure, and the law of God before pastime. There is, of course, this reason for the drab outward appearance of the Tabernacle, that it was erected first in the wilderness, and was designed to withstand the attacks of storms and tempests. It is no wonder, then, that it bore witness to the circumstances of its surroundings. But I do not think I shall be very far wrong in speaking of the other reasons also.

Inside the Tabernacle were to be seen the gold-covered furniture, and the gloriously embroidered hangings, and these should remind us that our joy in finding salvation and peace, in and through Christ, is the experience of the one who has taken the step of faith, and entered into the fellowship of Christ's elect. The blessings are not for the outsider, nor for those who remain in what the ancients called the "profanum," but for the "insider," the Christian.

Divided into two parts, generally called the Holy Place, and the Holiest, or Holy of Holies, or, as the Epistle to the Hebrews describes them, the first and second Tabernacles, this small building was made of boards covered over with gold. Each board had two tenons fitting into two silver sockets, and there were stays running along the sides, to hold the boards in position. The silver sockets were made from the redemption money of the Children of Israel.

We read the law, and learn that every adult person had to pay a half-shekel of silver as redemption money. Rich and poor alike made the same offering, in token of the fact that in one sense all were equal in God's sight, that all were sinners. Does not this remind us that it is through Christ's redemptive work that we have access to the Father? It is not by our own efforts, nor even by the righteous life of Christ, that we are saved, but by the life laid down. All have sinned and come short of the glory that God had desired each to have, and for the sake of the sinner Christ died, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. So in the very structure of the Tabernacle we have a warning against the modern teaching of a free and easy self-satisfaction.

There were four covers to the Tabernacle. The outermost was that of badger-skins, already mentioned. Beneath that was one of ram-skins dyed red, symbolic of the blood shed. The third was of white goats' hair, a type of the purity of Christ, and of the righteousness of the man who has believed on Him for salvation. The innermost cover was of fine linen embroidered in the Tabernacle colours.

Between the two parts of the Tabernacle was a decorated veil, which, reproduced later in the Temple, was torn at the death of Christ. The veil formed a barrier beyond which none might pass, not even the priests, but only the High Priest one each year on the Day of Atonement. This veil typified two things, first the barrier that sin has erected between God and man, and which only the death of Christ upon the Cross has torn asunder; and second, the flesh of Christ, Who for our sakes became incarnate. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." "The veil, that is to say, His flesh."

In the Holy Place stood the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and the golden candlestick, or lampstand.

Each of these in a peculiar way speaks of Christ.

He is the Bread of Life which came down from heaven and giveth life to the world. He is also the One in Whom the Twelve Tribes of Israel will find their final unity. He is

the one Mediator between God and man, through Whom the prayers of mankind are presented at the Throne of Grace. He is the One Light of the world Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is worth your noticing that the incense on the altar was set alight by a coal taken from the brazen altar in the courtyard, where the sacrifice of the Israelite had been offered, and so we are reminded that Christ not only purchased salvation for us, but also the opportunity of prayer that can be acceptable to God. He became the Mediator because of His offering of Himself on Calvary.

Within the Holiest Place was found the Ark of the Covenant, in which were placed the tables of the Commandments, a pot of manna, and the rod of Aaron which budded.

These things all speak, in their way, of judgment. Who can keep God's laws? Who has not broken each of them in thought or word, or deed? Was not the manna first given because of the complaints of the children of Israel? And did not Aaron's rod stand as a continual reminder of rebellion? Yes, each of these things speaks of judgment, and of the just wrath of God visited upon sinners. But over them all was the Mercy Seat, with the outstretched wings of the cherubim. If there had been no covering, there would have been the message of the law only. "The wages of sin is death." But the Mercy Seat is there, to tell us of the tenderness of God, Who has Himself provided a way by which the sin of man can be done away, and the love of God be caused to operate without injustice. "The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." So the Tabernacle sets out for Israel the ideals of God in Christ, and foretells the sacred ministry of Christ, a ministry that has enriched the world, and will still more enrich it when "the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

CHAPTER X

THE JEWS

IN one of the greatest theological works ever written : "The Analogy of Religion," by Bishop Butler, there is a chapter devoted to the question of miracles. In Butler's days, as in our own, one of the greatest stumbling-blocks in the path of critics and doubters, was the space given in the Bible to the recounting of Miracles. There are still many people who will not believe in miracle. They argue and declare that there is no such thing, and no possibility of such things. Consequently they hold that such events as are recorded in the Bible as miracles never took place ; that the accounts are untrue, that the Bible itself, therefore, is untrustworthy.

Bishop Butler uses many arguments, well reasoned out, in support of the Bible, and his work has become an outstanding classic which it would well repay us to study. He points out that the miracles of the Bible are attested by witnesses who staked everything upon their faith, even life itself. He reminds his reader that the witness of these men cannot be contradicted, because no one to-day is in a position to question the witnesses.

Again, he observes that all the argument against the miraculous in the Bible is the argument from ignorance.

That is to say, that the critic or doubter can only state that he, personally, has never seen a miracle; never known of one; that such a thing has not come within the range of his experience.

But if a man is to refuse to give credence to anything outside his own circle of knowledge and experience, he will find himself in a slough of all sorts of follies and absurdities. I am reminded of the story, probably apocryphal, of the

Oriental chieftain who caused a Dutchman to lose his head for attempting to "deceive" him by declaring that in Holland water often became solid.

We surely know, as a matter of hard and undeniable fact, that every one of us every day is compelled to accept as true, statements that we cannot possibly test in our own experience, or indeed in any other way. We accept the word of a friend, or the report in a newspaper, of some occurrence; and we do so without hesitation, even though the event thus reported may seem very strange to us.

Is it a waste of your time to illustrate this? There was an earthquake in England last June. At least so I understand from the papers and from friends. But I never had the least experience of it. Should I be justified in refusing to believe the report, because an earthquake in England is "an unheard-of event."

There are literally hundreds of things that we cannot prove for ourselves; that we simply must take on trust. We are told, for example, that prussic acid is a poison, and we believe it is. But why? I do not suppose that any one of us has ever seen anybody poisoned by taking prussic acid, and I don't suppose we ever shall. We go, and we are quite content to go, entirely on the word of what we are pleased to call "authority." What authority? Whose authority? Neither you nor I really know. It was discovered by someone, somehow. It came within the range of experience of someone, and that is quite sufficient to prevent us from testing the matter for ourselves.

Such illustrations show us how very readily we accept, and have to accept evidence that we cannot possibly question, on matters that do not actually come within the limit of our experience.

So Bishop Butler, in effect, says to the doubters: "You talk about your knowledge, yet after all, what is your knowledge? Ninety-nine per cent. of it is second-hand, and is accepted by you without a question. How illogical then, how really stupid, to cavil at the miracle accounts in the Bible, when you cannot by any means disprove them,

and when the evidence for them is a hundred times better than much more evidence that you accept without a murmur."

But the finest argument that Bishop Butler ever advanced in favour of the Bible truth, is this: He declares the Jew to be "a standing miracle." "You cannot," he writes, "deny miracles, when you have the standing miracle of the Jew before your very eyes."

Let us, then, study together the Jew as a standing miracle, as one of the greatest marvels of the world and its history; and as an argument that is utterly unanswerable, of the wonderful truth of the Eternal God, and of the Bible, which our Church of England Article so aptly calls "God's word written."

What an extraordinary people are the Jews? What an absolutely unique people? Far back in the dim and little known past, at the very dawn of history, their great ancestor and ours, Abram, left Ur of the Chaldees, yielding himself to the purposes and the guidance of Almighty God, as that he might become the founder of true religion and the father of the faithful.

Has it ever occurred to you before that the Jews provide a plainly visible link between that far-off day and ours? Has it ever struck you that the Jews furnish an undeniable evidence, and an absolute proof of God's call to Abram?

Just let us think together for a little while. Imagine yourself taking up the Bible and reading its message for the very first time.

Here is a book which in its first few chapters describes the creation of the world, and God's dealings with all creation. Deny the accuracy of the Bible statements if you will. You cannot deny that the statements are there.

But almost before you are aware of it, the wonders of creation are ignored, in a sense, and the many races of mankind, once mentioned, are set aside. If I may be allowed the expression, they are switched off on to a side line and almost forgotten. Only the first eleven chapters have been read, and then so early in the record as the

twelfth chapter of Genesis, the eye and mind of the reader is directed to just one man—Abram.

Very plainly, and with unfaltering precision, the line of that one man is traced down, and the reader's attention is focused on one nation, the children of this one man.

There can be no question at all about this—it is the clear teaching of the Bible that God calls out one man, Abram, and one nation, Israel.

It is quite true to say that the Bible sets out God's purposes for the whole world. It is quite true to say that the Bible declares to us the purpose of God in Christ for the salvation of all mankind.

No one could dream of disputing this who reads the Bible. Yet it is equally true that God's purposes, even God's crowning work of Salvation, are fastened tightly down to the history of one people—even Israel. Any contradiction of this statement involves a contradiction of the Scriptures. It is no strange view set forward by strange people called British-Israelites. It is the Bible teaching. So emphatically true is this that it is utterly impossible to separate, in the Bible, the Gospel of Salvation, from the story of Israel.

Yet what do we know to-day of this people Israel? Ten, if not eleven, of Israel's thirteen tribes have, to all outward appearances, gone like a shadow. Only the Jew is left. And for three thousand years the Jew has been treading this earth, never losing his place in the annals of history; always there; always before man's eyes; even as the bush which burned with fire and was not consumed.

Time and time again has the course of this world's affairs been changed. Nations and empires have risen up, flourished a little while, and passed away. All the pomp and power is of yesterday, the record, as it were, of a dream. But the Jews remain. And they remain, in the providence of Almighty God, to mock the Bible critic, to choke back doubt and denial.

Forget for a moment, if you can, that God rules over the affairs of men.

Forget, if you can, that this is God's world, made for His purposes.

Can you imagine what would be our position if all Israel had disappeared, all thirteen tribes ?

If the Jews had not remained, known and visible ? If, when Israel was driven into the wilderness, stripped of her identity, her way hedged up with thorns, that she might not find her paths, the Jews had accompanied her ; if, when Israel was divorced from God, Judah had also been divorced ; if, when Israel had been degraded, left without God in the world, left to worship idols, the Jews had been likewise cast away, would you and I be Christians to-day ?

Could we be Christians ? Could we possibly, under such circumstances, have believed in God and His Christ ? Could we possibly rejoice in His salvation ? And there is only one possible answer—"No." It would be utterly impossible. A very superficial reading of the New Testament should be quite sufficient to show us that.

But when Israel was gone, driven into the wilderness by the righteous anger of Jehovah, away from the presence of God, the Jews remained. And they remained in the providence of Almighty God ; they were allowed to return to Palestine after but seventy years of captivity in Babylon, so that they might preserve the Books of the Law and the Prophets, the sacred writings of the Old Testament, and so that they might cradle the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

Without the Jews the Bible would become almost as nothing. It would be little more than fairy tales. Without the evidence of the Jews the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ could easily be set aside.

There are two witnesses whom God hath called to testify to the fact that He is God. There are but two families whom God did choose: Israel and Judah. One, Israel, has disappeared from the view of man, and no one knows her as Israel to-day, and most refuse to see her as Britain to-day. What would have happened if the second witness, the second family, had disappeared also ? I know that there

are many who will want to tell me that I have evidently forgotten the proof of Christianity afforded by personal experience and the existence of the Church, and they will wish to persuade me that with these two "proofs" available the very Bible itself can be set aside.

Well, let us ask ourselves this question :

What actually is our experience of the Lord ? Is it not just this, that in Him we find exactly what the prophets foretold and the evangelists declare, of the mercy and cleansing grace of God ?

We have tested and proved that Jesus is Saviour, according to the Scriptures. We feel within ourselves that just what the Bible declares Jesus to be is the very thing we and humanity most need.

Whilst, so far as the Church is concerned, it is obliged to fall back upon the Scriptures in order to explain its very *raison d'être*, and to establish the authority for its creed.

The question, then, what would have happened if the Jews had disappeared with Israel, is a question that most vitally touches the whole fabric of our Christian faith. I venture to suggest that if the Old Testament had been preserved at all—a most unlikely happening—it would have been of no more value to us than some old clay tablets from the debris of Babylon; something for the high-brow scholars to wrangle over, something to catch the fancy of the archæologist, and maybe of the visitor to a museum, and nothing more.

In the Jews, however, we have a proof and a testimony that cannot be gainsaid. It is the Jews who save the Old Testament Scriptures from the dust heap, and make those sacred books the history of a living people ; a people upon whom three thousand years of change, of adversity, and of wanderings, have made no appreciable or essential effect.

And when I say that the Jews have saved the Bible from the museum shelf I do not forget the part that Israel has played and still plays ; I do not forget this first and greatest witness to the truth of God.

But the world does not see Israel, and it can see the Jews. The world has strange and altogether erroneous ideas about Israel. It somehow imagines that Israel has either been wiped out of existence or else has been absorbed by the Jews. So the world ignores Israel, and the wisdom of the theologian confuses matters which the Scriptures sought to make plain.

But no intelligent person, surely, can ignore the Jew, or pretend that the Jews give no evidence or furnish no proof.

The Jews actually constitute a standing miracle, an invincible argument of the Truth of God.

Now, as a matter of fact, God's two witnesses, Israel and Judah, are both active in the world. God's promises have not been, and never will be, broken. Some of the enemies of Israel and Judah had declared "The two families which the Lord hath chosen, He hath even cast them off." But God's answer comes through Jeremiah: "If ye can break My Covenant of the night . . . then will I cast away the seed of Jacob." And not till then? Will you, or anyone else, cause the sun to turn to darkness and the moon to cease her shining?

Neither, then, can you cause Israel and Judah to cease from bearing witness, or to become void to God's purposes.

"This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise," saith the Lord.

God called them, separated them from the other nations, disciplined them, even punished them, just for this very purpose. Each has witnessed in the past. Each bears witness now. Each must bear witness, for so has God ordered the matter, and nothing can or will alter the word of the Lord that has gone forth. "My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips."

Both families, then, must be giving their testimony to the word of God. It may be that both testify unwillingly. It may be that both testify unconsciously, even in spite of themselves, but this will not make any difference to the fact of the testifying.

The Jews, we know, deny that Jesus of Nazareth is their

Messiah. Their rejection and murder of Him is a fact of history. Yet the very existence and condition of the Jews is one of the best proofs that we can produce that Jesus is Messiah. So do the Jews bear witness to the very truth of that which they vehemently deny.

Some of us who believe God's word in its entirety, and who honour that word as essentially true, recognise the fact that in Britain lost Israel is found. But most Christian teachers imagine that we are "Gentiles" and of Japhetic origin. Israel's witness, therefore, to a very large extent, is unconscious witness. Yet is it not a fact that we are doing God's work in the world, shewing forth His mercy and truth ?

I am fully aware of the fact that only a few, even amongst professing Christians, take any real and serious interest in missions.

All the same, it is perfectly true that the British are the only people who do give a genuine attention to the preaching of the Gospel in other lands ; and the British are the only people who translate and spread abroad the Scriptures.

I am fully aware, too, of the many gross evils that mar our British life and besmirch our British character, yet that life and character will easily bear comparison with the life and character of other nations ; and it never loses by such a comparison. And it remains true that there is in-born in the British people a faithful desire to deal justly to love peace, and to promote mercy.

Let our very patience with India bear its witness at this very moment to the truth of what I say. Is it not perfectly true that many heathen countries have very real cause for gratitude to the British—for British help, British justice, British enterprise ? There is a very strong anti-British feeling being shewn to-day in Turkey, in Egypt, in India. Yet, what would be the condition of these countries if Britain had not supported and sustained them ? Turkey owes her very life, as an independent nation, to us. India and Egypt owe to us every single one of the many blessings they enjoy to-day.

Yes, though most of our people know it not ; though some do not think it worth while to get to know ; though some even deny it with abuse ; Britain is fulfilling Israel's prophesied destiny, bearing her witness to the Lord God Almighty.

And what shall we say about the Jews. Why they witness to the truth and work of God by the very miracle of their existence.

The whole history of the Jews, since the day that Zedekiah lost his throne and Kingdom, down to the present time, is a history that fits in, detail for detail, with prophecy.

Now the Jew has not deliberately sacrificed himself in order that these prophecies might be fulfilled ; he has not sought persecution so that the warnings of Moses and the prophets might find a completion in his life story. Nay, he is absolutely blind to the fact that he has fulfilled the Scriptures. He is, indeed, so far as the average Jew is concerned, absolutely ignorant of those Scriptures which his people have so carefully preserved. "Unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart." The witness, being quite unconscious, is all the more valuable. Moreover, when you think of all that the Jewish people have suffered during the last 2,500 years, is it not a miracle that they exist at all ? Yet they have come through the terrible fires unconsumed. They have even increased in numbers, and in spite of untold robbery and violence, they have increased their wealth, until to-day it would be true to say that they hold the key to the financial situation throughout the world.

Ever since the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the Jews have been subject to heathen powers, to foreign rule.

They have been exiles from their homeland, dispersed amongst the nations. Their story has been one long record of calamity and persecution. They have been exposed to endless evils of every kind ; to famines, and plagues, to captivities and banishments, to sorrows without numbers.

They have been subject to social degradation and distress,

to false accusations and massacres, to torture and robbery. Every attempt possible has been made by their foreign rulers to crush them out of existence. Yet they have persisted with a strange indestructibility. Truly, in the providence of God, they form a standing miracle. And so their story forms an impregnable fortress for believers in the inspiration of Holy Scriptures. For what else but God's foreknowledge and God's inspiration can account for the Bible statements in connection with Jewish history.

Here is a miracle that will confound all atheism, all agnosticism, all modernism. The Jews prove the hand of God in the Bible and in the affairs of the world, by their own history.

And when we understand this, when we grasp the full meaning of it, what an avenue of faith and hope is opened out for us. Are you ever troubled by doubt? Do you ever wish to ask, "Art Thou He that should come?" Do you ever feel inclined to say with David, "I have hoped in vain and laboured in vain"? Or as Israel once said, "Our bones are dried and our hope is lost"?

Remember the Jews. See in them the fulfilment of Scriptures, the unfolding of God's purposes. Do you wonder about the course that affairs in the world are running to-day? Do you grow pessimistic about the conditions in Britain, and the outlook for this country?

Remember the Jews. See how God has preserved them throughout trials far more anxious, in a furnace of affliction heated one seven times hotter for them.

And shall He not much more save Israel? Everything the Scriptures foretold about the Jews has come to pass so far, according to the Scriptures, and we look confidently for the coming to fulfilment of the final promises—their restoration, their complete reunion with Israel under the Messiah.

Thus shall the standing miracle of the Jews demonstrate to the world of heathenism and of unbelief, the full fact of God's wisdom and work.

This demonstration becomes even more remarkable when

we study Scripture and history in order to determine exactly who are the people called the Jews.

It is easy to discover from the Bible the difference between the House of Israel and the House of Judah, and that difference has been emphasised again and again in these chapters. And usually it is sufficient for our British-Israel purposes to leave the difference as one merely between the two Houses. But actually the House of Judah is divided into several parts, and the Jews are but one of the parts.

Judah himself, the forbear of the House of Judah, had three sons who are counted in the Scripture record, Er and Onan dying childless. The three that come in the story are Sheilah, Zarah, and Pharez.

Of these three, the Bible has little to say about either Sheilah or Zarah, though there are mentions in the genealogies which prove that they were not negligible.

The family of Judah which obtains most of the attention is that of Pharez.

One is inclined, if serious study is to be desired, to follow the line of Zarah and Sheilah Judah in stories that do not come in the Scriptures, for a serious student will naturally wish to know what has become of these two branches of the House of Judah.

I shall leave them on one side, however, because their story would lead me into the following of theories which, strong as they are, and convincing as they are, are yet outside the scope of my present purpose.

The Jew that we can see is a scion of the Pharez Judah family, and I want you to see what he really is.

The Judah that comes into the Kingdom history of Kings and Chronicles is of Pharez.

From this Pharez Judah there is first separated the House of David, and we shall find references in the prophecies to this House of David, which show that it was considered as a separate entity.

In 2 Kings xviii we are told of an expedition by Sennacherib against the fenced cities of Judah, seven years after the

fall of Samaria, and the carrying away captive of Israel. On the stones, on which is inscribed the Assyrian account of this expedition, we are told that forty-six cities were taken, and two hundred thousand people of Judah were carried into captivity, and placed along with Israel in Media.

The next detail you should consider is this : in Jeremiah xxiv there is given to us the vision of the two baskets of figs. There would be no sense in this vision at all unless it figured a marked division in the House of Pharez Judah. Already has the providence of God separated the House of David. Already has the House of Judah been seriously weakened by the captivity to Media. Now, about a hundred and thirty years later, a further fissure appears. Some of the House of Judah remaining are pictured as good figs, others are pictured as bad figs. I do not think that it is incorrect to suggest that the good fig section of Judah was the part of Judah that went away to the first Babylonish captivity ; and that the bad fig section was the part that accompanied Zedekiah into captivity some ten years later.

You may tell me if you wish that "it is obvious" that these captivities became intermingled in Babylonia, and it does seem as if it were the most natural thing to happen.

Yet that idea leaves me with the unanswered question : Why did God draw the attention of the prophet to a difference between the two sections, unless it was in His purposes to keep the difference ? Babylonia is a large area, and it would be by no means difficult for the captors to place one section of Judah here, and the other section there, in the empire.

And God speaks of them as different in character, different in destiny.

And when one has reached this stage in the study, it ought to be fairly obvious that our common idea of the Jews needs definite and serious revision ; that we have been labouring under very real misapprehension for years ;

that in this respect, as in many others, our Bible teachers have not been sufficiently accurate in their teaching.

But there is still more to learn.

Most of the House of Judah has gone into captivity; a large section joined the captivity of Israel in 713 B.C.; another section went to some part of Babylonia about 608 B.C.; whilst a third, the bad fig section, was carried to Babylonia in 587 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar, however, did not carry away all Judah that was left after 608 B.C. No, he left the poorest of the land under a Governor, and these soon departed into the land of Egypt. They were warned by Jeremiah that the sword they feared would follow them and overtake them in Egypt, and that their safety depended upon remaining in Palestine, under God's protection; but they refused the voice of the prophet and departed.

You may read the story for yourself in Jeremiah xlii and the following chapters, and you will see that I have not drawn upon my imagination at all, that I am stating Bible fact. Let our opponents say what they will, there it is in the Bible record.

And yet further; after seventy years of captivity, there went forth the decree of Cyrus, giving liberty to the Jews to return. How did they respond to the opportunity?

Opponents of British-Israel roundly declare that the whole Twelve Tribes of Israel returned. Let them advance their proofs. Ezra and Nehemiah, who record the return, say most clearly two things: First, that those who returned were of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, and they never mention a single other tribe. Second, that of these three tribes, only those returned who desired to serve God.

Most of even these three tribes remained in Babylonia, where they were prospering.

Those that returned rebuilt the Temple, rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and soon settled down to break God's laws again. Does not Nehemiah rebuke them for intermarrying with the nations round about? Does he not denounce them for trading on the Sabbath?

Now the story of this "Judah" which returned to Palestine is not a secret history. You may follow it in the Apocrypha, and in secular history. The tales of the Maccabees are quite well known. Why, then, should there be any mistake about the matter? The Judah to which our Lord came, the Judah which first heard the Gospel of the Kingdom, is a Judah that is but a small portion of the original House of Judah. It does not properly represent Judah, much less does it represent Israel and Judah. You may tell me, if you wish, that it is called Israel sometimes. Yes, the Jews are addressed as "Israelites" on several occasions, and correctly so, for they are Israelites. I may correctly address my congregation as "Britishers," and so they are. But my congregation is not "All Britain," nor does it even represent Britain.

Let our opponents try to apply a little reason to their opposition. Let them refuse to be led away by prejudice into gross logical fallacies, as well as into grave historical errors.

The Judah which was present in Judea, in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, was a small portion of the original House of Judah. Some of the original House was already with Israel, wherever Israel might be; some of it was dispersed, and was to be seen in various parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and, be it carefully noted, had no part or lot in the rejection and murder of Jesus of Nazareth; some of it had gone away into Egypt, and was lost; only a fraction remained in Judea.

And it was this fraction which was responsible for the treatment meted out to the Messiah. It was this fraction, increased possibly by visitors from other sections, which endured the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

It is this fraction, which, in its descendants, has been before the eyes of the world since A.D. 70 as a standing miracle, testifying to the judgment of God.

CHAPTER XI

THE EMPIRE TREK

IN the ninth year of Hosea, the last of the kings of Northern Israel, Samaria, the capital city of Israel, was captured by the Assyrians, and this northern kingdom came to a sad and humiliating end.

This was somewhere about the year 721 B.C., and we have a very full account of it given in 2 Kings xvii. This account shews at least three things. First, that the distinction between Israel and Judah, which had become so pronounced on the death of Solomon, persisted right to the very end. Second, that Israel of the Ten Tribes had never been absorbed by Judah. And third, that destruction came upon Israel only at that time. Judah continued for at least 180 years after the fall of Samaria.

Reading the story of Israel as it is given in the historical books of the Old Testament, and also in parts of the prophetic books, we learn that for many years constitutional troubles at home and military disasters abroad had been the order of the day for Israel. In strong contrast to the stability of the throne of Judah, Israel's throne and crown had been, as it were, tossed from one usurper to another. Many were the internal rebellions ; many were the murderers who sat on that throne ; and few were the men who were able to secure so firm a hold on it that they could ensure the succession of a son. Jehu, whose temporary zeal for God won him both fame and a certain amount of strength, did manage to retain the ruling power for four generations ; but his success only serves to throw into darker contrast the usually prevailing chaos of the days of Israel's first kingdom in Palestine.

The fall of Samaria in 721 B.C., after a siege which lasted

three years, came, then, as the culmination of a long series of disasters. The kingdom of Israel, the kingdom that had once been David's, the beloved of the Lord, and for which David had laboured so successfully ; the kingdom which was so famous in the days of Solomon, the kingdom that had been chosen out by God above all others in the earth, had come to an inglorious, pathetic end. The Israelites were carried away captive into a distant land, and their former estate, experienced in the land of Egypt, had returned to them. Only the kingdom of Judah remained, being at that time under the rule of the God-fearing Hezekiah.

Where is thy heritage now, O Jacob ? Where, O Joseph, is thy fruitfulness ? Where are the promises of God, made to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ? Are they all gone, and have they left neither shadow nor wrack behind ?

O that Israel had hearkened unto God ! Listen to the word of blessing that is to follow Israel's obedience : "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth ; and all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the young of thy flock. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out." And so on, through a wonderful passage promising richest prosperity. What joy and blessing had God in store for His chosen, the seed of Abraham His friend.

But listen again : "But it shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon

thee and overtake thee." And there follows the very gravest possible warning of curses and trouble corresponding to all the blessings, and going to the opposite extreme of disaster in the far-reaching effects.

And with this choice before them, Israel failed. By bitter experience they had to learn that the God of the promise is the God of the threat also ; that God's word, be it of blessing or cursing, is kept. God does not warn in vain, nor are any of His words meaningless.

Now, so complete was the ruin of the whole northern kingdom of Israel, through the coming upon it of this curse, that within a hundred years of the fall of Samaria Israel was almost unknown ; scarce a trace of them was to be found.

It is one of the most astonishing facts of history. Here was a people, great and powerful, renowned under Solomon for wealth and influence ; called in the Bible, "God's chosen" ; a people claiming as their destiny the chief position among the nations of the earth . . . for, mind you, there can be no doubt about Israel's claim. It may have been a false claim, but right or wrong, there it is, stamped upon page after page of the Bible. . . . You see this nation divided into two parts, and the larger part engaged about 725 B.C. in a life and death struggle with the Empire of Assyria, and in a comparatively short time so blotted out that people are asking : "Where is Israel ?" Now, there can be no question about this. Indeed, it is emphasised in several ways. Some historians have gone so far as to suggest that Israel as a nation is a myth, never having had practical existence, so far as this northern kingdom is concerned. "How," they ask, "is it possible for such a people as the Bible declares Israel to be to have become so completely lost to human ken ?" Others have tried to prove that Israel was absorbed by Judah, and ceased to exist as a separate nation very shortly after the disruption on the death of Solomon. "Not only did the Ten Tribes never go into captivity, but the Bible never says they did." So writes an opponent of British-Israel teaching, who, in his

anxiety to shew the absurdity of our case, chooses to ignore the plainest statements of the histories and prophecies of the Old Testament.

The critic and the opponent are both faced with the same problem, the disappearance of Israel's Ten Tribes. The one tries to get over the difficulty by denying that Israel ever existed, the other by denying the separate existence from Judah. And both must ignore Scripture in order to hold their views. Now we know that Israel really did exist as a nation quite separate from Judah, and that it was once a powerful nation, extending its territory in the days of the second Jeroboam, over Syria, and bringing even the ancient city of Damascus under its rule. (Yes, and this in the days AFTER the supposed absorption of Israel by Judah.) We are sure that the historical account in the Bible is accurate. But the views of the critics and opponents do serve to emphasise the wonder of Israel's disappearance.

But this disappearance, though indeed a punishment upon Israel for her disobedience to God's laws, was yet the beginning of a great historic movement which God had fore-determined ; a movement which may be well described as an empire trek.

After the fall of Samaria all trace of Israel, as Israel, is gradually lost. The threat of God through Hosea is carried out : "Ye are not My people, and I will not be your God." As far as the written history is concerned, Ten-Tribed Israel can truly be said to have vanished into complete oblivion, an oblivion that justifies the word of the prophet, that Israel has been blotted out of God's sight.

And yet, and here is the first intimation of something wonderful, you read the Bible, and you find that the prophets never forget Israel. They speak and they prophecy as if Israel not only was continuing in existence, but as if Israel was bound to continue in existence, as if some mysterious process were being carried on, out of sight of the world's eye, yet with absolute surety.

It is no piece of imagination on my part, let the opponent say what he will about the manifest absurdity of our case.

The prophets are simply full of the idea : "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not ; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee saith the Lord, and thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel."

There is no need for me to multiply texts, for I have said quite sufficient on this point in other chapters. There is the fact that the prophets are determined to keep Israel in the view of the Bible reader, and to persuade him that God has not forgotten Israel, nor abandoned His purposes concerning her. Indeed, so clear is the Bible in its statements that there is really not the slightest excuse for the theologian ever having misunderstood and misinterpreted them. A child in an elementary school can read them and grasp what they mean. One may compare the scheme of things as set forward in the Bible to a play in a theatre. The curtain has been rung down at the end of the first act. That act has ended in a scene of tense tragedy. But the audience knows that the play is not over. They know that there is a busy, ordered rush going on behind the scenes, and that the curtain will soon rise again on a new scene; a new act will begin.

I am constrained to compare our theologians and religious teachers, who have made such a muddle of the Bible, with the Wiggs' family who, going to the theatre for the first time, created quite an amusing interlude for the rest of the audience by setting off to leave the theatre when the first act was over. Like them, our theologians have rashly concluded that with the Fall of Samaria it is all over with Israel.

The prophets of Israel are like the proper audience, which understands. They have seen the tragic first act in Israel's life, but they know that the end has not come, and they wait eagerly for the rising again of the curtain, believing that it will reveal a new Israel, under a new name, living under new conditions. I do not know how anyone can possibly read the Bible without noticing the curious assumption of the prophets that Israel should rise again,

should grow in strength and importance, far beyond the limits reached even in Solomon's days, and should prosper and increase till her destiny is fulfilled, and the headship of the nations is won.

It is no use the opponent pointing to texts like 1 Kings iii, 8, and viii, 56, and trying to argue that Israel's destiny was fulfilled in the days of Solomon. For after the kingdom has been divided, after Ten-Tribed Israel has been driven out of her land for her sins, the prophets renew the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant to her as distinct from Judah.

Scarcely has Hosea uttered the dread verdict of God's judgment: "Ye are not My people and I will not be your God"; scarcely is the ink dry upon the page of his prophecy, than he feels the inspiring lure of the future vision and he adds: "Yet the Children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered for multitude." This is the kind of idea that seems completely to fill the mind of God's prophets; and how could they have received the idea but from God? Do not tell me that they were thinking of the Church that was to come. If the Israel of the blessing is not the same as the Israel of the punishment, then words are meaningless, and the prophecies are reduced to empty phrases.

Do not tell me that they were just enthusiastic patriots carried away with zeal for country, and refusing to face facts. Do not suggest that any man, however patriotic, however optimistic, could look upon such a wreck of a nation as Israel was, when Assyria had finished with her, and dare to say that out of that dust the world's leading people should arise. No, I am perfectly sure that these ancient prophets were under no delusions, whether they spoke of Israel or Judah. They were not blinded by love of country. Why, it is these same men who had spoken so strongly in condemnation of the sins of Israel, and who warned Judah of a like fate, if she did not learn from the experience of Israel. "And I saw, when, for this very cause that backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put

her away and given her a bill of divorcement, yet treacherous Judah her sister feared not ; but she also went and played the harlot."

Surely the secret of the prophet's writings, of their hope, of their vision, is that God had revealed to them something of His own counsels, and they had an intense, burning faith in the power of God to carry out His counsels.

Some hundred and thirty years after the fall of Samaria the prophet Ezekiel, a captive in Babylon, of the first carrying away of Judah, saw in a vision a valley full of dry bones. These bones, he was told, represented the whole House of Israel, an expression which does not necessarily include Judah. (Let any doubter read, for example, 2 Sam. ii, 9.)

He is bidden to prophecy to these bones, and as he obeys there is a shaking, and the whole desolate waste became filled with an exceeding great army. Ezekiel is concerned with Ten-Tribed Israel here, for the rest of the chapter show that AFTER this resurrection of Israel comes the re-union with Judah, and the appointment of one head to both.

Surely the very mention of this exceeding great army of Israel is sufficient to arrest our attention ? However was it to come about after the awful collapse of Israel ?

That is a question utterly beyond our human powers of answering. But it gives us ample scope for thought when we have Ezekiel writing down as an authentic story, told him by the Spirit of God, that this revival was about to take place.

Israel was sure that her end had come, and that God had really cast her off. "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost ; we are clean cut off." But Ezekiel assures them that it is not so, that God will restore them, and make them great again, and he speaks as one privileged to enter into the council chamber of God. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, all declare the same purpose of God. Israel is to be remade ; the vessel that is marred is to be remoulded.

Now, what are we going to make of these prophecies ?

Are we to pay any attention to them, or are we to turn them down as idle dreams ?

It is either that, or the recognition that Israel is still Israel even as the sun and moon and stars bear witness.

Charles Bradlaugh propounded a real test question when he asked : "Where is now this wonderful people of Israel, that were to be a people for ever ?"

Will any reasonable man wish to answer that the Church is Israel ? "For the now rejected Chosen people God has substituted His Chosen Church." Is there a line in the New Testament which gives support to that theory ?

I can imagine any educated man who is an enquirer into the matter of Christianity saying to me : "I read in your Bible of Manasseh, who was to become a great people, and of Ephraim his younger brother, who was to become greater than Manasseh, and was to develop into a nation and company of nations. I can see Britain as a nation and company of nations. I can see the United States of America, which, in spite of a great influx of foreigners, are yet British in origin. America may have forgotten its origin, but history shews it plainly enough. I can see Britain and America then, but I do not see Ephraim and Manasseh. They have apparently disappeared and others have occupied their place. I can also see Jesus the Nazarene, and might be inclined to agree that the Jesus of history has a strange correspondence with the Messiah of the prophets. But I am held up by the lapse of Israel. I can scarcely admit the validity of the Scriptures, and the claims of Jesus, unless you can clear up this doubt about Ephraim, and Manasseh and Israel."

Would you tell him that the Jews are Israel and that all these wonderful promises are going to be fulfilled upon the Jews in the days to come ?

I will admit that the Jews are an important people, and that they have made wonderful progress during the last 150 years. No one will want, surely, to dispute the very practical place in the world of business and politics that the Jews hold. But it is obvious to the world at large, and

to the Jews themselves, that they are a small and scattered people, not a nation at all, much less a nation and company of nations. They have neither king nor constitution, and even their law is little more than a dead letter.

But the prophets speak of Israel as distinct from Judah, and say that Israel shall endure as long as the sun and moon and stars. They are not thinking of the Jews, but of Israel. Then what has become of Israel? What do these visions of the prophets concerning Israel's resurrection mean? What are we to make of God's promises?

I have already compared the Bible picture to a play in a theatre, and I have spoken of the first act of tragedy. Using this same comparison, I would say that the Empire Trek is a play in three acts. The second act has for its theme, the wanderings of Israel from Palestine to her new home, to that appointed place promised by God to David many years before.

Amidst the turmoil of nations that characterised the years when the Southern Kingdom of Judah came to grief, when Assyria, Egypt and Babylon were disputing for the supremacy, Israel's opportunity came.

Assyria's power had been rudely shaken in the days of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib went out against Jerusalem and lost his whole army. Assyria never recovered from this shock, and soon got into difficulties with some of her vassal states.

Babylon rebelled, and was joined by the Medes. After a long siege, Nineveh, the mighty fortress, capital of Assyria, was captured, and the Assyrian Empire was broken.

The fall of Assyria brought Babylon up against Egypt in the bid for world empire. Judah, trembling for her very existence, determines to pin her faith to Egypt, and in spite of the warnings of Jeremiah, decides to lean on Egypt.

The result is well known. Ezekiel, carried away captive, is sent by God with a special message to Israel, making an offer of the renewal of the Covenant then and there. He even proposes to them the idea of the rebuilding of the Temple, and gives full details of the plan of God. But Israel

evidently rejects the offer of a protected return to Palestine, and so is told that she will be driven by the fury of God into the wilderness, and that there God will plead with her face to face.

Israel seizes the opportunity of the political turmoil, and escapes from captivity, determined to go away into another land to serve God, rather than accept any idea of a return to the old homeland.

We find in the Book of Esdras the definite statement of this movement of Israel, and we find Josephus corroborating it in later years. Israel passes out of Media, through the Caucasus Mountains into Europe, but she is not known as Israel. Her name is changed, and we must trace her along the Empire Trek by means of archæological discoveries, with the help of secular historians and the sifting out of traditions. So, though from the time that Israel reached Scythia history ceases to speak of her as Israel, and gives to her many names, such as Skuths, Khumri, Sacæ, Norsemen, and such like, yet we are so helped by Bible prophecy and circumstantial evidence that we may easily follow the Trek. Indeed, the difficulty that comes to my mind is not how to discover Israel by means of all the evidence, but how to avoid discovering her.

Circumstantial evidence is sometimes refused by our opponents. They are pleased to look askance at it, forgetting that it is considered the best evidence in a law court, simply because no one is able to tamper with the witness. And when you have it, as in this case, supported by Bible prophecy, surely the case is beyond the power of anyone to overthrow ?

We are told, for example, in Hosea and Ezekiel that God intends to drive Israel into the wilderness ; to hedge up her way with thorns, so that she may not find her paths back to Palestine ; to deprive her of every association with Palestine, and will cause her to become Lo-Ammi, Not My People, and so make her an uncircumcised, barbarian people.

Now, when you find Herodotus and other Greek histor-

ians writings about a barbarian horde wandering about Scythia at this very time, describing them as an army of escaped slaves, is there not but one conclusion to be drawn, that here we have Israel, lately come from captivity in Media ?

Again, we find in the Crimea an ancient cemetery, where the gravestones shew unmistakable signs of an Hebrew origin, and there are many place-names suggesting a connection with Israel. One step further. Our Anglo-Saxon origin can be traced back to Scythia, and history tells us that the Anglo-Saxons first appear about 600 B.C. in this region.

That is to say, history takes our ancestry back to the very place and the very time that Israel was wandering as a nameless barbarian horde. When and where Israel disappears, then and there Anglo-Saxondom appears. Israel's grave is the Saxons' birthplace. Then what is the obvious conclusion to be drawn ? And with the known historic movements of the Anglo-Saxons across Europe to Britain, the Empire Trek has taken a clear and wonderful turn. We are now once again in the broad daylight of history, and the account of it is too well known to need any description here. So we pass on to the day, about A.D. 450, when our forefathers arrived in these islands. They came here after a thousand years of wandering, and here in the appointed place, God brought them once again under His Covenant, the New Covenant, the message of which was first delivered to them by Christians from amongst Israelites who had preceded them, the main body of Israel, in the way to Britain. Behind all the wanderings, both of the vanguard who had early received the gospel from Joseph of Arimathæa, and of the main body who came in as Anglo-Saxons, there was God's unalterable purpose. Israel, lost to herself, lost to the world, but remembered by God, was led by the cords of God's love to find her refuge and her settled home in these islands, even as was foretold by Isaiah : "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, in paths that they know not will I lead

them. I will make darkness light before them, and the crooked places straight. These things will I do, and I will not forsake them." So comes to an end the second act of this wonderful drama of the Empire Trek.

Let me now describe the third act, which deals with the expansion of Israel from a small island people into an Empire, a nation and company of nations. It is the standing up of Israel on her feet, her development into an exceeding great army.

It began in the days of Elizabeth, just after the Reformation had become an established fact. And there is a real significance in this point of history. In 1584 a handful of people went out to found the colony of Virginia. In 1606 another handful landed in Chesapeake Bay. In 1620 there took place the historic voyage of the *Mayflower*, when forty-one families went out to Massachusetts.

These colonists were not poor folk who, finding no sustenance in their own land, had wandered elsewhere in the home of gaining a livelihood. No, they were in great part professional men. How they fared and how they prospered will be easily understood when we look at Canada and the United States to-day.

And there is surely no need to detail the extent and grandeur of the British Empire of to-day?

Let any man look at a coloured map of the world, and he will indeed find enough to make him ponder. And if he has any soul at all his study will make him realise how far the British have trekked and to what good purpose.

God has given into our charge the heritage of the heathen, even as He promised through David in Psalm cxi, and He has delivered unto us to develop the desolate heritages of the earth. Thus has Israel been blessed, and the promises of God to her have been fulfilled. Australia, New Zealand, many parts of Asia and Africa, America, and countless islands in Atlantic and Pacific all bear their testimony and speak out the marvel, the mercy and the greatness of the God of Israel.

I say there is no need for me to detail the extent and

grandeur of the British Empire to-day. Is there, indeed, any need for me to speak of the way that Empire has been brought into being? Is it not enough to describe the growth as that of a people trekking far and wide over the face of the earth and founding new Britains in distant lands?

I feel justified in suggesting to you that if you could read the history books of a thousand years hence you would find therein the Empire Trek of the British people during the years following the French Revolution as the most marvellous movement of all history.

The history of Britain is a medley of many voices; it is in some respects a most curious history; but it is not difficult to trace the hand of God throughout it all, directing, ruling, over-ruling.

"Even in other lands the people of God will be ready to recognise the signal providence which has given Britain her place and mission among the nations, and used her for the distribution of the Word of God and the evangelisation of the world." That is taken from a call to prayer issued by seven Anglican Bishops in January, 1931. It is quite evident that they believe that God's purpose has been left in British hands; that the British are the witnesses of God.

"By divine compulsion, by the logic of our own past, we are chosen to uphold the things of God." This is from a leading article in *The Times*.

Each of these quotations bears its testimony to the fact of British-Israel identity and to the truth of this story of the Empire Trek.

But most extraordinary of all quotations that it has ever been my privilege to pass on is the one taken from the preface to "Little Treasure Island," one of those many excellent publications of Mr. Arthur Mee.

"Far away from the Island, out in Saskatchewan, a Red Indian schoolboy was looking at a map. They showed him the British Islands, and he looked with astonishment at the little spots. He could hardly believe so small a space

stood for the British Empire. Moving his fingers across the wide Atlantic Ocean, he said at last: "The men who navigate ships from America to England must be very wise and clever." "Yes, they are," replied his teacher, "but what makes you think so?" "Because," said the Red Indian boy, "it is wonderful that they do not sail past England without seeing it."

So lost on the map of the world is the Island, and yet in all the boundless universe does any speck of earth so thrill with pride? No nobler thing can ever happen to any boy or girl than to be born upon this precious isle, set in a silver sea, from which has gone forth to the ends of the earth a spirit of freedom, a love of truth, a thirst for knowledge, a yearning for justice, a faith in God, a hope for immortality, without which the world could never be the happy place it is to live in. As the grain of mustard seed grows till it covers the field, so the seed of the spirit of the Island has grown till it covers the earth; so completely has it covered the earth, that if some terrible disaster could sink the Island in the sea, or shatter it to dust to be blown upon the wind, still its greatness would live on—in the love of home, and freedom, and truth, and justice, and order, and beauty, that the Islanders have planted everywhere."

And that was written, not by an enthusiastic believer in British-Israel, but by one who actually scoffs at our belief! So blind, sometimes, are men to the issue in logic and fact of their own words, their own convictions.

But what a wonderful testimony does he give to the glory of the Empire Trek. Far and wide has Britain spread, and where she has set her foot there have been planted indeed the ideals of love of home and justice and freedom, and order and truth, and all those ideals which go to the uplift of the world in which men live.

Let us thank God for the signal providence which has given Britain her place in the world, and which has done so in fulfilment of the promise to Israel. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In overflowing wrath I hid My face from

thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. O Thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will set thy stones in fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord ; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

CHAPTER XII

THE FOUR GOSPELS

It will doubtless come as a distinct surprise to some readers to hear that there are four Gospels mentioned in the New Testament, other than the Gospel accounts of the four Evangelists. Yet the New Testament speaks, first, of the Gospel of the Kingdom; second, of the Gospel of Salvation; third, of "another Gospel"; fourth, of the "Everlasting Gospel."

To deal with the fourth.

In Rev. xiv, 6, we read of the angel coming with a message to the people of the earth. The message is called a gospel, yet it is concerned in the main with judgment; and this looks almost like a contradiction in terms.

Yet this proclamation of the hour of God's judgment is indeed a good news.

How many thousands of sincere folk in this country—to say nothing of those in other lands—are labouring devoutly in the cause of international peace and brotherhood? One can scarce walk down a main street anywhere in our land without seeing some poster set up by the League of Nations Union or the Society of Friends. The appeal for disarmament; the appeal to common sense; the appeal to better feelings, the gospel of human unity; these are the points persistently and sincerely advocated.

And what do we see on the other side. Disorder in Spain, gangsters in America; revolutions in South America; civil war in China; racial hatreds and religious fanaticisms in India; strikes, wars, rumours of wars; lust, crime, an increase in crimes of fraud; the lust which James declares to be the very cause of war.

"How long, O Lord, how long?"

Does not every idealist, every earnest disciple of Jesus Christ, long for the day of peace? Yet men scorn His sacred Name, and the many deeds of shame prove how cold love is; how seemingly impossible of attainment our ideals and hopes are. And we turn and read: "I saw another angel flying in the mid heaven, having an eternal gospel to proclaim," and hope revives, ideals are realised as coming certainties. God will act, and crown our feeble efforts with success. God will act where we fail. God's hand is laid on ours, to strengthen, to direct, to complete the work.

The eternal gospel, concerned with judgment indeed, yet a gospel because it is the good news of the triumph of those very ideals towards which we are straining so hard and seemingly so hopelessly to-day. That, briefly, is the fourth Gospel.

Then Paul speaks twice in his epistles of "another" gospel, warning his readers in Corinth and Galatia that there are preachers professing to teach Jesus Christ, using His name, apparently disciples, who are to be avoided, whose teaching is to be refused because they are preaching "another gospel."

If we take sufficient note of the Bible teaching about Jesus Christ we shall readily discern whether a professed Christian creed is the true gospel or "another" gospel.

Students of Church history are aware of the controversies that have raged right from the very first over the doctrines of Christ. Who is He? What is He? What was His work?

Now, I am sure that the man who will go to this Church history with an unbiased and judicial mind will recognise that in drawing up the creed which has now become orthodox, the creed known as the Nicene Creed—though Nicea saw only the first part of it completed—the Church Councils of those days did not formulate any *new* belief. They did but re-affirm that which had been taught from the beginning; that which had been denied by adversaries. Let me be explicit. The orthodox creed declares the Deity of Christ.

Now there are modern sects, professedly Christian, which deny categorically the Deity of Jesus Christ. They declare that the doctrine was an invention of the fourth century.

Read the history of the Church, refuse to be side-tracked by the records of party struggles and shameful behaviour of bishops and clergy, ignore the personalities of the controversy, remember that a doctrine is not changed from truth to falsehood because a bishop who advocates it leads a rabble against another bishop who denies it. Passions were undeniably let loose during the controversies, and many foul deeds have been done in the name of truth and religion. Let us try to set aside this, as having no direct bearing on the doctrine itself.

Ask the question: Who was first—the teacher of the Deity, or Arius the Unitarian? And there can be no doubt about the answer that honesty will give. The Church's teachers had been teaching from the very beginning that Jesus Christ is God, and Arius rose up to deny this teaching. The affirmer was first in the field, the denier came second. It is exactly the same in the doctrine of the Resurrection. The affirmer came first, the denier was second.

So it is with every point of our Christian Creed. That Creed was drawn up in set form to enshrine doctrines which were first in the field, and which had been attacked by deniers who came second to the field.

And Paul warns us against those who come second, preaching "another gospel."

We may conclude, therefore, that any sect or school which preaches anything contrary to the Christian Creed is declaring "another" gospel.

These sects or schools, these denominations, may protest as loudly as they like.

They may claim as passionately as they will that they are Christians and that they love the Bible and Jesus.

If they refuse the Virgin Birth, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the Second Advent, the Deity of the Lord

Jesus Christ, then their gospel is "another" gospel. For these things are plainly stated in the Scriptures.

I will not argue them now, for I set forward each doctrine in later chapters. It is sufficient to note at present that these doctrines are declared in the Scriptures, and therefore we are able to discern for ourselves the differences between the true or false Churches, between true and false creeds.

Nor let us be carried away by sentiment. Many will consider our "narrowness" and "lack of charity" in this matter, and speak of the sincerity and good living of the members of these other sects.

Let me say this, that sincerity in believing a doctrine does not make that doctrine either Scriptural or true.

We are dealing here with matters of Bible teaching. "What saith the Scripture?" That which must decide us is not the manner of life of either affirmer or denier, but only the agreement of one or other with the Scriptures.

If sincerity of belief and truth in belief were the same thing, as our "broad-minded" friends would urge, then a Mohammedan or even an atheist, could be a "good Christian."

A Christian is a disciple of Jesus Christ, and as such, accepts wholly and without reservation all that Jesus Christ taught. Now, as we must go to the records of the New Testament to learn what Jesus Christ taught, this means that a Christian must accept without reservation what the Bible says about Christ.

The Bible declares His Deity, tells us that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that God the Father gave Him as a Saviour, and that He died upon the Cross for man's salvation; tells us that He rose again the third day, for our justification; and informs us that He is coming again to reign on this earth, and so establish peace, justice, righteousness over all the earth.

This is the Bible gospel, and any gospel which denies any one of these points is not a "Christian" gospel, but "another" gospel. Good living *follows* on the Gospel of the

Bible, it is *not* a substitute for the Gospel of the Bible, nor should we confuse the issue by bringing in the matter of good living as evidence in argument.

What I have said on the point of the "other" gospel has of necessity caused me to refer to the Gospel which the Scriptures declare, in setting forth the Eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Saviour of the World. I shall say no more about this Gospel at the moment, leaving its explanation in more detail to my next chapter.

There is the Gospel of the Kingdom yet to be mentioned ; the expounding of which takes us back into the pages of the Old Testament.

God, having redeemed Israel from the House of Bondage in Egypt, brings them to Sinai, and forms the twelve tribes into a kingdom. At Sinai God descended, in the symbolism of the cloud, heralded by the trumpet, to establish Himself in Israel as the God and King of Israel for ever.

There, too, He spake, in the ears of the people, the Law, the principles of the constitution of the Kingdom, by which Israel should be governed in the first instance, and which through Israel should be extended over all the earth.

This Law, as I have explained in a former chapter, has two distinct sides to it, and the two should not be confused, neither should the elimination of the ritual law, because of its completion in Christ, cause us to make the mistake of concluding that the civil and social law is eliminated also.

At Sinai, then, Israel was formed into a kingdom, with God Jehovah as King, and with a God-given Law.

Over this kingdom, at a later date, God established the vice-regal Throne of David. I call it the vice-regal throne advisedly, for the Scripture says that David sat on the Throne of the Lord, and reigned over the Lord's people as the representative of God.

In our Lord's day the Jews had apparently lost sight of the fact that this "Kingdom of Heaven" was still in existence, or else they concluded that the Kingdom was for them alone, to the exclusion of Israel, to whom the Kingdom was transferred by the hand of God in Reho-

boam's days. (We shall do well to consider the significance of the words of 1 Kings xi, 31: "I will rend *the Kingdom* out of the hand of Solomon," "I will take *the Kingdom* out of his son's hand.")

But Jesus and His disciples preached the fact clearly enough: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"; "The Kingdom of Heaven is come nigh unto you"; "The Kingdom of Heaven is in your midst."

But the Jews turned a deaf ear to the teaching and claims of Jesus. They declared: "We have no king but Cæsar."

Thus they rejected the Kingdom teaching, the Kingdom, and the King.

It is worthy of notice, however, as showing a distinction between the Gospel of Salvation and the Gospel of the Kingdom—a distinction I hope to make fully clear in my next chapter—that the rejection of the Kingdom teaching by the Jews did not mean that the opportunity of salvation was withdrawn from them.

I am very much surprised to find how many teachers have confused our Lord's words: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation."

It has been supposed that Jesus was thereby rejecting Israel, and transferring the offer of salvation to the Church.

Nothing of the sort, surely? The Church does not receive any offer of salvation from Christ. Surely the Church is the blessed company of the faithful, the company of those who have accepted the offer of salvation.

It is the acceptance of the offer which gives a man entry to the Church. Moreover, Jesus commanded His disciples to preach the gospel of Salvation to all the world, beginning at Jerusalem. The offer of salvation is still open to the Jews, and always has been, and there are missions to the Jews carrying the offer to-day.

What the Jews lost was the Kingdom of Heaven; they lost the opportunity of being administrators of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom teaching, then, continues in the New Testament right on from the Old.

Four Gospels, then, are enumerated in the New Testament, three of which are taught of God, and those three answer to all our human hopes, for ourselves, for our nation, and for the whole world.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM AND THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION

FOLLOWING immediately on the outline of the last chapter, let us study together the two Gospels of the Kingdom and of Salvation in rather more detail.

If we read the discourse of our Lord as He sat on the Mount of Olives with His disciples we shall observe that He taught them that the Gospel of the Kingdom was to be preached as a witness to all nations, and then the end should come.

This is really an arresting statement, and I marvel that it has been so misunderstood, and its meaning so confused. Surely the words: "As a witness to all nations" ought to be sufficient, not only to prevent the confusion of this Gospel with the Gospel of Salvation, but to set the student thinking about two questions.

First, what *is* this Gospel of the Kingdom which must be preached as a witness? Second, what is the meaning of the word "end"?

Let us take this second question, for it can be more shortly answered.

By the "end" is meant, not the passing or destruction of the world or the inhabited earth, but the completion of the present age or dispensation.

Many people hearing sermons about the Second Advent and the end of the world, are seized with fear and trembling because they presume that the earth is about to vanish in fire and smoke. Preachers on the Second Advent are not altogether free from blame for this misapprehension, but there is little excuse for the fear.

Paul writes that we should comfort one another with

the hope of the Advent; and comfort and fear are very different ideas.

We should recognise the fact that there have been ages, or dispensations, fairly clearly marked in the history of the world. Apart altogether from the age markings of the Bible, we speak historically of the Middle Ages, the Victorian Age, the Stone Age, and of others.

The Bible history may be similarly divided into the Patriarchal and Mosaic Ages of the Old Testament, and the Christian Age of the New Testament.

There was the dispensation of Law in the Mosaic Age, whilst there has been the dispensation of grace since the first coming of the Lord.

During this age of grace man is freely offered the opportunity of sanctified obedience and service of God, through the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now it is the end of the age of grace that our Lord foreshadows in His words on Olivet.

This offer of salvation, of safety that is, in Christ, will not always be open to man. God has set a limit, a time-limit, to His offer. As Paul told the people of Athens, "God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness in Christ Jesus."

By the end, therefore, is meant the end of the days of grace. God offers us His free gift—forgiveness of sins, and life in Christ—now.

"Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation."

And by making that offer God, of necessity, gives us the alternatives of accepting or rejecting. The decision is ours. We may have the gifts of God now, or we may spurn them to our eternal shame and loss.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." But the time of this opportunity, the day in which we may use this grace, is limited—"God hath appointed a day."

And it is the end of this time that is meant when our

Lord says: "Then shall the end come." When this Gospel of the Kingdom shall have been preached as a witness to all nations the end of the dispensation of Grace will come—man's opportunity of loving, loyal service in freedom will go. The nations shall be smitten, and Christ shall rule over them with a rod of iron.

For with the end of the opportunity of Grace shall come to an end also man's power and opportunity of doing evil.

Righteousness *shall* be established in the earth. "The Law shall go out from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." And all men *shall* obey that Law and observe that word.

Now, when shall this end of the dispensation come? When comes the promised time that wars shall be no more, and lust, oppression, and crime shall flee from the face of the Lord? When shall the Law of the Lord be established in all the earth?

The words of our Lord give the answer.

"When this Gospel of the Kingdom shall have been preached as a witness to all nations," the day of our Lord's Return will come, and all the blessings of the Return and of His reign on earth will become the world's portion.

Therefore there comes this important question: "What is this Gospel of the Kingdom"?

There are those who tell us that it is the same as the Gospel of Salvation. They rather indignantly assert that there is only one Gospel declared and expounded in the Bible, and that any attempt to differentiate between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Salvation is heresy—is a detraction from the glory and work of our Lord.

Surely their indignation is due to hasty and incomplete thought? Surely it is based upon a careless reading of the Scriptures? I am sure it is.

Let me make this statement and seek to show its truth from the Bible. The Gospel of the Kingdom *cannot* be the same as the Gospel of Salvation. *Cannot be*. And why not? Because the Gospel of Salvation has been preached to all

nations for nineteen centuries, and the end has not come. "Oh, no," someone will say ; "the Gospel has not been preached to all nations. That is a ridiculous statement. Do we not sing, 'Tidings sent to every creature, millions yet have never heard.' And do we not still need a great increase of missionary activity" ?

Well, so far as individuals are concerned, all this is true. Moreover, to judge by the way the Churches go about their work, millions never will hear. For there are thousands of professing Christians who never give a thought or a prayer or a penny to the true work of the Christians, which is that of witness.

But so far as nations are concerned, there is not a single nation which has not heard the Gospel of Salvation centuries ago.

We know of Thibet as a closed land, do we not ? No preacher of the Gospel of Salvation is allowed to enter. Must it not be obvious that Thibet, as a nation, has heard of the Gospel, and her rulers know perfectly well what this Gospel is and that it declares Jesus of Nazareth to be the Saviour of the World? It is because they know what this Gospel is that they have closed their land to the preachers of it. Actually, therefore, there is no nation on earth that does not know and which has not known of the Gospel and its message for centuries.

And even in the matter of individuals, are we not aware of the fact that there were flourishing Churches in Africa, China, India, Japan, right away back in the early days ? Why, any reader of Church history must know of the old Christian Churches that were so strong in Africa in the fourth century, and which later were swept aside by the Mohammedan advance.

Nay, we can go right back to the days of the Apostles, and read what Paul says : "Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven." Now, that can only mean that in Paul's days the world had had opportunity of hearing the Gospel of Salvation. Is this very

surprising? Well, consider the Bible statement that Christ came in "the fulness of time."

We may take a view of the Roman Empire of the day, and may learn that the roads and trade routes of the empire were open and safe for travellers.

It was slower travelling, indeed, but actually more convenient than at the present time. A traveller could pass overland from Jerusalem to Gaul, and he was travelling under one authority all the way. There was no delay at a dozen frontiers with the customs officials of a dozen governments.

Consequently it was comparatively an easy matter for the apostles and their helpers to get all over the empire.

Now let us notice this carefully, that Paul does not say that the world was *converted* by the preaching of the Gospel of Salvation, nor is there ever any teaching in the Bible to suggest such an idea. No; we ought to know our Scriptures sufficiently well to understand that the Bible never says that the world will be converted by the preaching of any gospel.

It says, indeed, exactly the opposite. It tells us that people, the world over, will hear and refuse; that they will reject the message and close their ears and their hearts.

What the Bible says is that the Gospel will be *preached*; that some will receive and bring forth fruit; that others will reject, treating the Gospel message as the stony ground, or thorny ground, or the wayside, treats the seed scattered.

Paul tells us, then, that in his days the Gospel had been preached, that his generation had received its opportunity of using the grace of God.

But the end did not come in Paul's days, did it? Therefore, if the Gospel of Salvation is identical with the Gospel of the Kingdom, Paul made a serious mistake.

And, of course, there are people to be found who are quite ready to argue that Paul did so make a mistake and very much overestimated the success and the extent of the Gospel teaching. They will tell you also that Paul definitely

expected the end to come in his day, and that, finding the end was not approaching as rapidly as he had presumed, he changed his mind in his later years, and altered his teaching about the Second Advent.

But however much justification men have, or think they have, for their idea that Paul changed his views about the Second Advent, his statement about the extent of the Gospel preaching remains unaltered. The Gospel of Salvation had indeed been preached far and wide by the time Paul wrote to the Colossians. But the Gospel of the Kingdom had not been preached as a witness to all nations, nor has it yet so been preached. When the witness has been declared the end will come.

Indeed, that very word "witness" should appeal to the intelligence of the Bible reader and show him without argument that here is a Gospel that has an express purpose which surely is not the purpose that lies behind the preaching of Jesus as Saviour.

It is by preaching the Gospel of Salvation that the Gospel messenger seeks to prepare his hearers for the Coming again of the Messiah.

The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom will tell us whether the day of that Coming is nigh at hand or afar off.

So there is a difference between these two Gospels.

What, in fuller details, is the Gospel of Salvation? It is the good news that God has provided a way whereby every sinner can be saved from sin and the power of sin. God, our Creator and Father, is a God of infinite holiness and righteousness. And the holiness and righteousness of Almighty God has been outraged by our disobedience and sin. Men talk glibly to-day about the Love of God, and they seem anxious to forget altogether about the righteousness of God. Nothing that is defiled, nothing that is sinful, can ever enter into the presence of God and stand before that Infinite Purity.

Even if a man could turn, in his own strength, from sin and live a pure life, never again doing a wrong act, never again saying a wrong word, never again thinking a wrong

thought—even if a man could succeed in doing that—there is the past to be reckoned with.

Dare you or I say that the past does not matter now? Dare we say that our present intention, even our present success, cancels all the past debt of evil and permits of it being ignored? Surely not.

“The moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on, nor all thy piety nor wit can lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all thy tears wash out one word of it.”

It is no use whatever any man thinking that sin does not matter and will not count against him. The man who imagines that and counts on that is living in a fool’s paradise.

Now, the Gospel of Salvation tells us that the love of God has provided a way to satisfy the outraged majesty of God, which man can never never satisfy.

The Gospel of Salvation tells us that God gave His Son to suffer in our stead, that all our sin might be cancelled.

“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Now, you may object to this idea of substitution, as I have before remarked, but it is a Bible doctrine, plainly stated. You may declare that it is a piece of “play-acting” credited to God by ingenious philosophy seeking to deceive itself over sin. I answer that in the analogy both of nature and of regular human experience the “substitutional theory” finds abundant evidence in support, and there is no real case against.

Christ died, the godly for the ungodly, and thus has the writing against us in the judgment book of God been blotted out. Christ has nailed our writ of condemnation to His cross. That is the message of the Gospel of Salvation.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the good news that God has founded a Kingdom—not a Church—a Kingdom which will in the final issue absorb or destroy all the kingdoms in

this earth. "It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

"The kingdoms of the world are become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

The present order of things, in which wars and tumults and strikes are inevitable because of man's sins and lusts, will pass away altogether. The present world-order of things, filled with the works of the devil, will be overthrown, and God's rule will be established.

"But in the latter days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say: Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of God from Jerusalem. And He shall judge between many peoples, and shall reprove strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

That is the teaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Again. The Gospel of Salvation is an unlimited Gospel. God's offer of Grace is open to all—men of every nation, colour, and language. There is no colour bar or racial distinction of which the grace of God in Salvation takes any account. But the Gospel of the Kingdom in one respect at least is a limited Gospel, for it is concerned in the first instance with Israel.

The Gospel of Salvation is preached to announce the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, and therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is preached as a witness in order to demonstrate the truth of God, and the surety of His purposes.

The Gospel of Salvation is concerned with personal experience of Jesus Christ, and with faith. Hence the rejection of that Gospel by thousands, all down the ages. Hence also the commonly expressed opinion that one religion is as good as another. For some reject altogether the idea of personal experience of Jesus, and call it an hallucination. Whilst with others personal experience does not go very far or very deep. One is driven, even with every desire to be just and charitable, to wonder whether some professing Christians have ever been converted in the Bible sense of the word. So definite is the Bible teaching of salvation involving faith and personal experience.

The Gospel of the Kingdom, on the other hand, is not concerned with this experience of Christ; it is concerned with the rule of Christ; and thus it reminds us of the point made earlier that God has set a limit to the days of grace.

Now, it may be said that the New Testament says little about the Gospel of the Kingdom as I have explained it, even if it says anything at all, whilst it is full of the Gospel of Salvation.

This is not correct. The Gospel of the Kingdom is definitely taught in the New Testament, even as it is fully expounded in the Law and Prophets of the Old.

Paul clearly assumes a knowledge of this Gospel on the part of his readers, for he makes it the basis of his teaching. Paul's favourite doctrine is that of "justification by faith," a doctrine which has been made the standard and hallmark of all evangelical teaching. And every reader of Romans and Galatians will observe that the basis of Paul's argument is the Covenant God made with Abraham, which Covenant is the first announcement of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

May I pause here to correct a very common error? British-Israel teaching is frequently set aside by readers of Paul on the ground that Paul fits the Covenant promises to the "spiritual seed" of Abraham, and not to any fleshly

seed. That is to say, that the Church is the heir to the promises, not Israel.

This view commonly held by our opponents is due, frankly, to careless reading, which is almost unpardonable. I am really amazed that learned men can make so serious a mistake. Paul differentiates between the spiritual seed of Abraham through Isaac, and the fleshly seed through Ishmael. Paul is not setting aside the Isaac seed to make room for a Church. He is setting aside the Ishmael seed to make room for Israel.

Again, in our Lord's own teaching we have the parables of the Kingdom, all of which expound the Gospel of the Kingdom, and none of which has direct bearing upon the Gospel of Salvation.

These parables are plainly concerned with affairs here on earth, and some of them figure a state in which there is a mixture of good and bad until the second advent of the Lord.

Moreover, the teaching of these parables clearly leads up to, and necessitates, the Second Advent, and so they bear directly on our Lord's words. "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations," and then shall the end come.

There are three questions that may come to your mind, as they have come to those with whom I have conversed on this matter.

"Why was the Gospel of the Kingdom restricted to Israel in the first instance?" Because of God's promises to Abraham, which covenant blessings developed, by God's purpose, upon Isaac and Jacob, to the setting aside of Ishmael and Esau. Further, because of Israel's failure in the earlier stages of her history God has permitted another Kingdom to rise to power and authority in the earth.

If you turn to Daniel ii, you will read of a succession of world empires, of which Babylon was the first, established by God and allowed by God, because of Israel's failure and lapse into idolatry.

You will remember the challenge of the Pharisees and

Herodians to Jesus: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?"

Our Lord's answer is a commentary upon Daniel ii: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." What were Cæsar's privileges and dues? "Kingdom, power, strength, glory, and the right to rule."

And this power, this dominion of the Cæsars and their successors, was to last until the years of Israel's punishment and humiliation were over. Therefore, whilst the other dominion remains the Kingdom of Heaven is restricted to Israel.

"Why must it be preached?" It must be preached to shew the truth of God; to let the nations see that Israel is still Israel, and that God's word of promise does not fail. It must be preached so that other nations may come, if they will, to find peace and shelter under God's Throne, in alliance with God's chosen people.

The second Psalm puts the call to the nations this way: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish in the way."

That is not a call to kneel at the Cross. It is a call to pay homage at a Throne, and that Throne is the Throne of Jesus over the House of Jacob.

"Will the nations accept this Gospel?" Some will, and some will not.

The Old Testament prophesies the establishment of God's Kingdom of Israel "in the top of the mountains" and faithful nations flowing thither.

It also prophesies the gathering of other nations under the wing of Gog and Magog against Israel, in an attempt to overthrow the Kingdom of Heaven.

As with the Gospel of Salvation, so with the Gospel of the Kingdom. Just as the message of *individual safety* is rejected by some, so too is the *national* message rejected by some.

But as many receive the one, so too many will receive the other, and will come to Israel, to join for safety and peace and prosperity with Israel under the rule of Christ.

CHAPTER XIV

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

THE first thing that one needs to make clear, as one approaches this subject of the Virgin Birth, is that it is most plainly set forward in the first chapters of the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke, and consequently, everyone who believes the Bible to be true believes in the fact of the Virgin Birth. If a person does not believe this doctrine of the Bible, and of the Christian Church; if he wants, for any reason whatever and in any way whatever, to alter the plain words of Scripture, it is only because he does not believe the Bible. He may protest as loudly as he likes that he loves the Bible, and thinks there is no book in the world like it. If he does not believe the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, it is because he does not believe the plain statement of the Bible. That is all, and there is an end to it. That, then, is my starting point.

Now, we are told often enough to-day that modern scholarship and modern science cannot accept this doctrine. Every student of theology knows of the discussions and denials of the past few years. It is really no new thing, though the present generation thinks it is, and thinks some new discoveries have been made by modern scholarship which settle the matter. Actually, the main doctrines of the Christian Church have been subject to attack from the very first, as a very simple reading of Church history will shew. Indeed, we have but to read Paul's Epistles to know that the Resurrection, for example, was questioned by professing Christians in Corinth in his own day.

Let us then ask this question: "What is modern scholarship?" What does it know? What does it know about the Virgin Birth, and the facts of the case, that enables it to

give so definite a verdict, and gives it authority to set aside and reverse the faith of ages ?

Well, let us be quite clear about this, that modern scholarship knows nothing about the case that you and I do not know. You may go to the most learned and most brilliant of scholars of to-day, and he will fail to tell you a single detail about the Virgin Birth that you do not know, and that you have not known for years quite as well as he. And that will be clear to you after less than two minutes' thought. For if you want to know all the facts of the case, you must go to the Bible. And he must do just the same, for there is no other source of information. There is not a single book in the whole world, other than the Bible, which has recorded the Virgin Birth. Hundreds of books may have commented on it. Reams of paper have been used in the discussion of it. **ONLY THE BIBLE HAS RECORDED IT.**

When, then, men deny the Virgin Birth, and advance scholarship as their reason, they are talking nonsense. Scholarship knows no more about the facts of the case than does the most simple and humble reader of the Bible.

The Bible tells plainly enough, in prophecy and in history, the story of the Virgin Birth, and no one and no amount of scholarship can get away from that fact. It is stated in words that an elementary school-child can read. Therefore, when people, calling themselves either scholars or Christians, or both, deny the Virgin Birth they are denying the accuracy and truth of the Scriptures. It is not a matter of scholarship at all. It is not even a matter of interpretation at all. It is nothing else than a matter of undiluted unbelief. If these folk were really honest, they would frankly admit that the Bible plainly teaches the Virgin Birth, but that they do not believe the Bible.

Some, indeed, do admit this, and they advance the view that the early chapters of Matthew and Luke are not genuine, nor original parts of the Gospel story. But many more refuse to believe, even whilst professing to accept the whole Bible.

Those who deny the genuineness of the chapters will, of

course, give you many reasons for their opinion, and they will seek to shew you, from the "assured results" of scientific research, that the very idea of the Virgin Birth is absurd. But their arguments and opinions are not PROOF, and they should never, by fair-minded people, be advanced as proof. It is easy to set out much weightier opinions and arguments on the other side, as we shall see. But when you stop to consider, do you not think that it is a matter for real amazement that any man should dare to set forward a modern scientific opinion as an argument against the Virgin Birth? Or, indeed, as an argument against anything? For is not the least educated amongst us well aware of the notorious fact that scientific opinion is in a constant state of flux, and scarcely holds to its position for a month at a time? I remember asking one of our scientists a question at a public meeting, when he had been trying to shew that the Bible was all wrong because it could not be made to square with science. I asked him what guarantee he could give me that the present views of science, as explained by him, would not be out of date in ten years' time. He replied: "Science does not change its mind." Yes, that was the answer given!

I reminded him that the books on science in use in school when he and I were boys were hopelessly out of date to-day; that the theory that was accepted as final then was the Atomic theory; that when we left school it was just beginning to give way to the Ionic theory; that now that was gone, and even the Relativity theory was passing. Science never changes its mind? Does science ever do anything else?

In the matter, therefore, of the Virgin Birth, it is neither more nor less than a question between belief and unbelief.

And so I want to take you straightway to consider the evidence for belief, and let you see for yourself how strong that evidence is—far too strong, indeed, for any scholastic fads and fancies and opinions to overturn.

Let us begin this way, by asking a question.

“What is the world’s deepest and most baffling problem ?”

What is it that upsets the very best of human desires and schemes ? Is it not sin ? You may call it by another name, if you like. You may call it “wrong thinking,” and so be in fashion with the intelligentsia, who do so love to find unintelligent methods of expressing themselves. You may declare, with the numerous adherents of a craze that calls itself a religion, that folk only need to think correctly in order to have the whole world put right. But put it in whatever words you choose, here is the fact, that the world as we know it is a disordered world, a world of false values and false standards, a world of wrongs and injustices, a world of sorrows and sufferings.

I do not forget the other side in the least. I do not forget the brighter side, that for many of us life is happy enough on the average, and that we do get a great deal of enjoyment out of life. But the amount of sin, and the appalling consequences of sin, in the world to-day are distressing facts. Scientists will tell you that all things are governed by laws. And we know that the stars move in their appointed courses ; that their movements can be reduced to a mathematical basis of calculation. We know how the vegetable world proceeds on a definite recognisable round. Whilst even the animals, when uninfluenced by man, follow the instincts of their kind. But there is one department of the world in which the usual universal rule of law breaks down. And it breaks down very palpably and very badly. It is the department of human nature. Man possesses both instincts and capabilities that fit him, in a way immeasurably superior to that of the animals, to ensure the preservation both of the race and of the individual. Yet he is continually using those powers in a way that is plainly injurious to his own and other people’s interests. Man is clearly endowed with a faculty of reason, seemingly denied to the animals, yet that power of reason is persistently applied for the hindering of human progress. You have only to think of the tremendous amount of

brain-power and energy that has been diverted from works of contruction to works of destruction during the life of the present generation. And still, in spite of the lessons the world protests it has learned, it continues to devote its talents largely towards harmful, and admittedly harmful, ends.

Yet again, man is certainly conscious of a moral law, even when he is what we call a degraded savage, and he has some conception of right and wrong, however feeble its development. But what man is there who consistently and persistently obeys this moral law ?

I am not setting before you the tenets and theories of some ideal philosophy or religion. I am simply stating facts—plain facts, that ought to be patent to all. We do not think of these facts every day, I know, for we have grown so used to this experience that we take it for granted and never let it disturb us, until some great upheaval or crisis comes to awake us to a sense of its full meaning.

This condition of affairs is a very real one, and Paul's definition of it as "lawlessness" is a very true one. The presence of evil amongst us and the consequences of evil, seen in the manifold forms of suffering, crime, loss, selfishness, are realities which no amount of ingenuity can dissemble or explain away, though some teachers have attempted so to do.

Now, my purpose in pointing out and emphasising these facts—facts which, I feel confident, no serious-minded person will desire for a moment to deny or challenge—is this : the chief purpose of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, as declared in the Scriptures, was to remedy this lawlessness.

I am not concerned, for the moment, to argue the question as to whether the Incarnation has succeeded, or is succeeding, in its purpose. I am simply stating the fact, made clear in the Bible, taught by the Christian Church throughout the centuries, and accepted and believed by all Christians, that this was the purpose of the Incarnation. You have it most tersely expressed by Paul in these words : "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of

the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, if you grant the condition of lawlessness, as indeed you must, it follows as a perfectly clearly reasoned-out conclusion that there can be no argument on a *priori* grounds against the Incarnation. That is to say, there can be no argument from cause to effect, or on the grounds of knowledge and experience. And that is the first point that I wish to make against "critical" or "modern" scholarship. For no one can say that the Virgin Birth is a miracle, in the sense that it is a violation of natural law. Critical scholarship starts with the question: "Is God likely to interfere with His Own laws?" And that is the wrong start. The question that ought to be asked is: "Is not God likely to RESTORE those laws when ALREADY interfered with by the sin of man?" For, as we have already seen, the interference is a fact. The only alternative that is logically left to the critical scholar is this, that the exception to universal law which human nature exhibits is a permanent exception. In other words, if you argue that the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth, is either improbable or impossible, because it is something contrary to our experience, your argument comes to this, that you know exactly what human nature was originally, and that consequently there is no known remedy for man's violation of moral law; and, further, that no remedy ever will be known. You are arguing that sin is inevitable, that sinful humanity is a normal state and condition.

Are you prepared to argue that? Are you prepared to admit, or even to suggest, that the many sorrows and inequalities and injustices and crimes, which are the result of man's lawlessness, are natural and inevitable? If you are, then shall I not be fully justified in suggesting to you that suicide would be the quickest way to end it all?

But if these things are not natural and inevitable—and who really thinks they are?—then we must logically admit the possibility; nay, the high probability; of a way of reconstruction. It is not merely a matter of hope, nor even

an instinctive feeling in the heart of man, it is a reasonable conclusion, reasonably reached.

Very well then, if you admit that a way of reconstruction is both possible and highly probable, you are compelled to admit the possibility of God's way of reconstruction, as it is taught in the Bible and by the Christian Church. That is to say, you must admit the possibility of the Virgin Birth.

So-called "modern scholarship," therefore, has one ground of its argument, and that the chief ground, cut from under its feet. Reason, by itself, is most emphatically on the side of the "traditional" belief, and therefore scholarship cannot argue that the "traditional" belief is either impossible or improbable. It can only say that the *proof* of the "traditional" belief has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. And that is the statement that we must now investigate.

The proof of the "traditional" belief is found in the Scriptures; in the plain interpretation of the Scriptures. The fanciful interpretation of one well-known writer and founder of a sect, that Mary conceived an idea in her heart and gave to this idea the name of Jesus, really will not bear serious consideration by intelligent people. No, we must take Scripture in its plainest possible meaning, whenever and wherever we can.

Now, can modern scholarship throw any light upon the scriptural proof? Has it made any discoveries that either invalidate or modify the scriptural proof? No, not at all. It has set forward many diverse opinions and views, but it has never produced anything in the way of research and discovery that sets aside the Scripture statements. Scholarship delights to find fault with the Scriptures, and rejoices in claiming the authority of science. Yet in every single instance in which an exact science has been able to compare Scripture with the theories of scholars, it has invariably been to the advantage of the Bible and the discomfiture of the critics. And where science cannot be exact, its view is favourable to Scripture to-day. Our epoch is, indeed,

witnessing a distinct change in the attitude of scientists towards the universe, and they are more ready to-day to admit that their instruments are not doing all that was expected of them, and that the materialistic point of view, which denies miracle, is entirely out of date. Sir Ambrose Fleming, for example, is the latest to admit the possibility of the "pillar of fire," and the appearance of "the Glory of the Lord," so often noted in Scripture.

When it comes, then, to the question of debating the scriptural proof, so-called modern scholarship has no case. And it knows it has no case. It knows that its attitude is simply one of unbelief.

Let me state now what the Scriptures say, and you will see and know for yourself everything that is written and known for surety about the Virgin Birth.

First you can read Isaiah vii, 14 : "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign ; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

I shall be told at once by the critics, I know, one of two things, if not both. One, that the word translated "virgin" here means in the original Hebrew, "young married woman." Two, that the verse is part of a sign given to Ahaz, and it is not a prophecy at all ; for what would be the use of giving a sign to Ahaz that was not fulfilled for 700 years ?

In answer to the first criticism, I would ask you to note that opponents of the Christian creed, like opponents of British-Israel identity, are continually asking you to refuse the accepted translations of both Authorised and Revised Versions, and to substitute a private translation of their own.

The Revised Version margin has "maiden" as an alternative for "virgin," shewing that the weight of authority is against the critics. Further, Matthew quotes this verse, translating it into the Greek, and the Greek word used as the equivalent for the Hebrew, is the word commonly used for "virgin." And further still, Matthew would have had no reason whatever for quoting this verse unless it had the

same meaning for both him and his readers, that is, the meaning of "virgin," and unless both he and his readers deemed the verse prophetic in the sense of foretelling. As for the second criticism, it is simply puerile. It is a very common criticism, I know, but it is none the less an absurdly childish criticism. First of all, anyone ought to be able to read that the verse was addressed, not to Ahaz, but to the House of David. While, therefore, like many another prophecy, it may possibly have had an immediate fulfilment which Ahaz saw, it was far more a prophecy, applicable to the Virgin Birth, because it was a sign to the House of David, and not to any particular member of the house. The sign was meant to assure the House of David, that long after the confederacy of Syria and Ephraim against it had collapsed and was forgotten, the house should continue, and should issue in the coming of the Messiah. And that this was the accepted meaning, prophetic and messianic, is surely shown beyond all possibility of question by the fact that Matthew quotes it as such. Moreover, it accounts for the instant assent of Mary. How otherwise can you explain her words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" ?*

After reading Isaiah, turn your attention to the genealogy given by Matthew. Look particularly at verse 16, and notice the change of expression. Verse after verse says, "begat," but here it is no longer "begat," but "Mary, of whom was born Jesus." What would modern scholarship give if it could change that verse and write, "Jacob begat Joseph, and Joseph begat Jesus." But it cannot, thank God. It is written, and none can explain it away without writing himself at once as an unbeliever. Read verse 19. If Joseph were the father, why his qualms ? The Jews of that day, who so carefully kept genealogies, would surely have

* A similar method of interpretation to that of the higher critics in this instance is found in some of the criticisms of the British Israel case. It is argued from James i, 1, that the twelve tribes of Israel cannot have been "lost," nor any part or number of them. If ten had become lost, how could James have addressed his Epistle to them ? It is a seemingly plausible, but really unthinking, argument. For surely every reader ought to realise that the Epistle was written as much for this present generation of Israel as it was for the generation of the first century.

been delighted if they could have proved that Joseph was the father of Jesus. But they could not. They knew he was not. They had to content themselves with making indirect remarks, such as, "We be not born of fornication," with the clear implication that Jesus was so born.

Now let us be certain of this, that being born of fornication is the only alternative to the Virgin Birth. And if you accept this alternative, you will have to admit that the purest and noblest of religions—to put Christianity on no higher plane—has sprung from an impure source.

Read Matthew's whole account as given in his first two chapters. You will notice how prominent Joseph is. Joseph is altogether in the foreground at the first. *His* pain and doubt, *his* very remarkable consideration for Mary, God's messages to *him*, these are the things that seem to be of more moment to Matthew than the actual miracle of the conception. And there are, I think, two reasons for this peculiarity in the narrative. First, the fairly obvious one, that Matthew had learned all about this wondrous Birth from Joseph. Second, that it was God's provision of an infallible proof. For the very last man in the world to have furnished proof and evidence for the Virgin Birth, had it not been divinely taught, would have been Joseph.

It is easy enough to understand the hesitation of Joseph when he discovered Mary's condition. It is easy enough to understand his scruples. It is also possible to understand his kindly determination to put her away without scandal, though we must admit such a determination was the mark of a very rare and forgiving spirit. What is utterly beyond my powers of comprehension is that Joseph should marry Mary, and then pass on to Matthew this story of her conception and childbirth, unless the story were true.

You have, of course, the possibility of suggesting that these early chapters of Matthew, like those of Luke, were not part of the original Gospel story. And we know that this is a suggestion that is often made, and is accepted by the scholarship of this unbelieving age. It is declared that neither John nor Paul seem to know anything about the

Virgin Birth. Let us note, therefore, that every single chapter that Paul and John write about Christ presupposes the Virgin Birth.

Matthew and Luke date right back to the first century, and there is not the slightest evidence of any interpolation. The onus of proof rests, not upon us, who maintain the genuineness of these chapters, but upon those who deny them, and no proof whatever has been produced. Time and time again through the centuries has the statement been made that these chapters are not genuine. Time and time again has proof been demanded, and not a jot has been forthcoming. Time and time again has the charge been turned down as the biased statement of ignorance and unbelief. And that is the best that can be said for it. In the brief period between the Crucifixion and the writing of the Gospels there would not have been time for a myth of so extraordinary character to grow up in such a soil as that of the Christian Church.

Moreover, as some of the earliest writings of the Church are defences of the Christian creed against the statements of unbelief, it should be acknowledged that the creed must have been taught from the first, in each of its fundamentals. Further, one of the most striking facts of history is that Christians have been the salt of the earth. That is to say, that the best work and truest labours for the uplift of mankind have been wrought by men and women who were upheld by a fundamental delusion, if . . . IF . . . the scholarship which denies the Virgin Birth is justified. Is it reasonable to suppose that these men and women were really trusting in a shadow? If those who regard the Virgin Birth as incredible would only reflect on the doctrine of heredity, which the science of recent years has brought so much into prominence; if they would consider the obvious truth that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," they would surely see at once that it is not only natural, but necessary, that Christ should be born of the Virgin. Inasmuch as the first man is of the earth, earthy, the Second Man must be of heaven, or He would be no Second

Man at all. He would be earthy, like the rest of us, and sinful.

Another point. Do we not hear to-day, as the common teaching, that men need to follow the example of Jesus, and that therein lies their own salvation and the salvation of the world? It is the sum total of modern teaching in the pulpit. Do we not often hear preachers praise Him as the perfect man, and plead that His exemplary life should not be obscured or spoiled by ecclesiastical dogmas? Yes, that, in the main, is the message of the Churches to-day.

Then let us think of it. Is it not correct to say that those who speak and teach thus, are trying to dethrone our Lord? They lay stress on what they see of His earthly life; but they throw aside and deny the very thing that gives *reality* to that earthly life; that is, the *Godhead* that expresses Itself in His earthly life. The old saying holds good: *Aut Deus, aut homo non bonus*. "Either He was God or He was not a good man." For let us particularly note this fact, which is patent to any intelligent reader of the Gospel story, that it was NOT His HUMAN example, or HUMAN perfection, to which Jesus Christ pointed as the things of chief importance. It was to HIMSELF He pointed, as the ONE, the ONLY ONE, Who could help and heal mankind. "I . . . I am the Way." No "good man" could ever have made the claims that Jesus Christ made, unless they were absolutely true, for the claims were of so amazing a nature that it would be just at this very point that His goodness would become evil, His teaching of truth a lie, and the whole fabric of His example would be overthrown as worthless. Either He was God or He was not a good man.

The whole teaching of the New Testament lays emphasis upon the Godhead of Jesus Christ. Therefore the whole teaching of the New Testament presupposes the Virgin Birth, and rests upon that doctrine for its foundation stone.

So let us turn to Luke's Gospel. Read his genealogy, and you will see that it gives Mary's side, not Joseph's. Nor is it difficult to recognise that in Luke's history we have the

story of the Virgin Birth told from Mary's point of view. We read of her wonder at the angel's visit ; of her gentle submission ; of her swift journey to her cousin Elizabeth, to seek as well as to give a woman's sympathy. We read her hymn of exultation. And I find in Luke's narrative, as in Matthew's, an infallible proof of God's direction. For surely Mary could never have spoken thus, of this greatest event of her life, and could never have opened up her secret to anyone, if that secret had not been of a Divine visitation, of a miracle of conception. For who will wish seriously to contend that Mary appears in the Gospel story as anything but a pure and most charming example of true womanhood ?

I can understand a woman doing wrong ; I can even understand a woman being so depraved that she boasts of her wrong-doing, and makes some sort of a song about it. I can understand these things, though they would sorely shock my sense of chivalry and idealism. But what I cannot understand is that a woman should make out of her shame a song of most beautiful and exultant praise that has been sung by countless sanctified lips. I simply cannot understand such a song from one who was not both pure and beautiful in life and spirit. And if you contend that the song was probably never sung by Mary at all, but was composed by Luke, you do not solve the problem. You only substitute two or three problems for one. For besides the problem of such a song on such a subject, you will have to prove that Luke did NOT receive it from Mary, and you will have to explain how it came to be attributed to Mary, and believed in as such by genuinely earnest Christians as Luke and countless others.

I have come across this saying somewhere, I know not where, in my reading : "How many things, hard of explanation, must a man believe in order not to be a Christian." And it is certainly true that if a man says : "I can't believe in the Virgin Birth, it is beyond my powers of belief"—then he will have to gulp down a number of beliefs far harder of acceptance, and far less worthy of credit.

When I first wrote this dissertation for insertion in the *National Message* I received a letter from a student in a northern city, explaining that in the days of Jesus there were a number of secret sects and societies amongst the Jews, after the style of Freemasons, and that these sects chose distinctive names for themselves. One of these societies was known as the "Sons of God." Joseph was a member of this secret society, and that is how Jesus became known as the "Son of God."

That is set forward, without the slightest attempt at proof for any one of his statements, by a man, presumably of average intelligence, as an explanation of the Virgin Birth and of the Scriptural teaching concerning Jesus Christ. And I venture to suggest to you that there is no more sense in any of the other alternatives that are set forward for the scriptural doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

So, then, Luke's narrative may be set side by side with Matthew's, and you have two vivid pictures, painted by two devout souls, that bear on their faces the stamp of truth, and that only bear one interpretation.

Is the Scripture evidence ended here? Most modern scholars would hastily answer "Yes," and they imagine that if they can only succeed in relegating these two stories to a late and superstitious age they have proved their case against the Virgin Birth. So I would ask you to read the first chapter of John's Gospel, and the first chapter of his first Epistle. Can you honestly declare, after reading these two chapters, that John knew nothing of a Virgin Birth? Surely the Incarnation, which he states in terms far more striking than those of either Matthew or Luke, necessitates a knowledge of the Virgin Birth? No one can say that because John did not set down the fact in so many direct words, as did Matthew and Luke, that he knew nothing of it. That would be to jump to a wild conclusion that is directly negatived by John's whole teaching on the Incarnation. Moreover, we have our Lord's own words: "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also . . . I am from above . . . I am not of this world

. . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad . . . before Abraham was, I AM."

Can any honest man, reading these words, say, "Jesus never taught that he was anything but an ordinary man, born in the ordinary way"? Most certainly not. The teaching and statements of the Scriptures are plain enough to be understood. There is nothing in them which suggests any intricate problem of interpretation. Their message is an open message. The alternative, then, as I have said before, is not one between ignorance and scholarship, it is one between belief and unbelief.

We may accept the Scripture teaching, and so furnish ourselves with the only hopeful picture that can be found, the whole world over; or we reject the Scriptures, and thereby, no matter how intellectual or scholarly we may be, we deprive ourselves of the only true knowledge of salvation, either for ourselves or for the world.

The fact is, I think, that we have grown so accustomed to our own human nature that we take it for granted that we know everything about it that is worth knowing. But the real truth is that man presents an intricate problem that is insoluble by man's philosophy or effort. What is his origin? What is his destiny? How is it that with so great capacities his average achievements are so small? How will he explain his sins, his sorrows, his hopes, his fears?

The only light that has been shed with any satisfaction upon this complicated problem is the light that is shed in the Bible, and particularly by Christ in the Bible.

If, then, the Virgin Birth be denied, and the Personality of Jesus Christ be reduced to the level and standard of human personality, the problem is not made easier of solution, but is complicated still more by the rejecting of the only clue to its solution that we possess.

To return, then, to my first statement. The world as we know it is a disordered world, with false standards, cruel injustices, undeserved sufferings.

Are these things inevitable, or are they opposite to the

true and original plan of the Creator? If they are not inevitable—and who really believes they are?—then, for God's sake, let us shew our sanity by accepting God's way of reconstruction, the only way that provides the least hope of success.

And God's way is just this, expressed in possibly the most beautiful words of the New Testament: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

For it stands to reason, I think, from what I have already tried to show, that however much men may desire union with God, that union must come, in the last resort, as a free gift from God. We finite, inferior, sinful beings, cannot command God, we can only accept God, and we must accept Him on His Own terms. There is no philosophy, no scholarship, no science, that can refute the saying of Paul: "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Lord Jesus Christ was born into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, God Incarnate in the Virgin's Son, to recreate the world, to restore to the world and to humanity the purity they once both had. It is a glorious message, a wonderful truth that we must lay hold on, and never let go.

CHAPTER XV

THE ATONEMENT

IF we are to give serious thought to the doctrine of the Atonement, and see the sure reasonableness of our faith in the death of Christ on our behalf, we must begin by defining our terms and getting as clear an idea as possible of the situation in which we find ourselves placed as men and women.

Our Christian faith is expressed for us by John in the words, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and by Paul, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly—God commendeth His love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Is this a reasonable faith? Can it be justified in these days when men love to appeal so much to reason and science?

I think it can, and I want to teach you that truth by the grace of God.

But if I am to teach you anything worth while—anything of service to you—and if together we are to learn what the Bible wants to teach us, we must think out together three preliminary points—punishment, penitence, pardon. Shall we begin just as if we are all quite ignorant of the Scriptures—as if we had never heard of Jesus?

We have then first of all to consider a very common experience of mankind—punishment. What do we think of when we hear or speak of punishment? What is the common or popular conception? It is pain—pain inflicted by someone else upon a wrong-doer. The simpler we are in our illustrations the better it will be. A child disobeys his father, and is caned. The cause of the punishment is disobedience, the action is the action of the father, and the

object of the action is to hurt the child so that he will realise the wrong of disobedience. And the punishment makes a kind of equation with the wrong-doing. If the child has not done serious wrong, the punishment is light, the worse the wrong act, the severer the punishment. Isn't that it ?

And does not the same idea underlie all punishment ? We do not inflict punishment for pleasure—that would be brutality, not punishment—our object is to prevent, if we can, a repetition of the wrong.

So we realise, as soon as we begin to define our terms, that punishment is a moral means working to a moral end.

And the moment we get to this point in our definition, we begin to realise that underneath punishment lies the double principle of love and justice, and above it lies the principle of righteousness.

I think this is tremendously important, because we have against us, challenging our Bible doctrine of Atonement, the modern argument that God does *not* punish.

I want to get at the Bible idea that apart from punishment for sin, atonement has no meaning—I want to get to the Bible idea that “God so *loved* that He gave His only Begotten Son.” Are we not correct, then, as far as we have got, that punishment for wrong-doing is pain, inflicted for a moral purpose, prompted by love, and directed towards righteousness ?

Let us keep to the simple illustration of the child. Suppose I fail to punish my son for an act of disobedience ? Suppose I act on the idea that love cannot punish ? Suppose I use no discipline other than smiles and kindly words ? Will not my son come to believe that disobedience does not matter ? “Daddy only talks.” The modernist, of course, will tell me that my son must learn that disobedience grieves me. But at once I ask : How is he to know that he grieves me, unless I act in some particular way ? And it really makes no difference to the *principle* or the *fact* of punishment, whether I cane him or send him to bed, or stop his pocket money, or what not. Whatever I do,

whether the pain inflicted is physical or mental, I must shew my grief at his disobedience by some act. If I did not, if I acted on the principle that loves does not, cannot, punish, there could only be one end : my son would grow up to believe that right and wrong did not matter, and he would grow up to be an intolerable nuisance both to himself and others. I was once arguing at a teachers' meeting with a vicar who declared that God does not punish because God is love. "Did he punish *his* children if they were naughty"? I asked. "Yes," he answered, "but I don't drown them." But really, was not that a very stupid answer to give? He had in his mind, of course, the words, "the wages of sin is death." But in objecting to the final end of sin, he was sweeping away punishment altogether, whilst admitting that as a man he punished his own children.

I feel, then, and am confident, that in accepting and acting upon the common principle of punishment, we are not merely acting upon an instinct of human nature, but much rather upon a principle of common-sense. And further, in inflicting punishment we are trying, in love and for righteousness' sake, to prevent wrong-doing.

I am fully aware that sometimes punishment is inflicted in anger, and unjustly, that sometimes it is out of proportion to the offence, but we need not concern ourselves with the exceptions and the side issues raised by reason of human frailty. All we need to do is to recognise the principle in the ideal, and acknowledge in the ideal, the fact of punishment in love and justice as an experience of humanity.

That is the first step in our study.

The second step concerns penitence. And here again we find, by using the simplest illustration, that we are dealing with a definite human experience. The child that realises, either through conscience or punishment, that he has grieved his father, will manifest a spirit of sorrow that we call penitence.

I am aware that sometimes no sorrow at all is shewn : I am aware that sometimes punishment seems to bring out the very worst side of character—but we need not concern

ourselves with exceptions. The general rule is that children shew sorrow for wrong-doing, and are ready to promise better behaviour.

It may be argued that penitence is produced by fear of punishment and is our animal instinct to avoid punishment.

I do not think so, because penitence comes as often *after* punishment as *before*, if not indeed, oftener after.

And just as, ideally, love and a desire for righteousness prompt the act in punishment, so love and a desire for righteousness prompt the thought of penitence.

There would be no sense in sorrow for sin, would there, unless there were a desire to be better, and unless love prompted it ? Here is a Bible illustration—and how very true to human nature these Bible stories are. Think of the woman who came to Jesus, washing His feet.

She wept. Why ? Because she realised the depths to which she had fallen ? Yes ; but more. Because she felt the deep pricks of conscience in the presence of the Lord Jesus ? Yes, but even more than that. If that were all she need not have come so near, nor acted as she did. The Bible gives the answer that comes nearest to human experience when it writes, “because she loved.”

And now a step further. Punishment—penitence—what next ?

Is it not obvious ? Pardon. Surely it is.

But when we go deeply into the argument we shall find a difficulty here that we can't overcome by ourselves.

When a man has sinned, and knows he has sinned ; knows that he deserves punishment ; how can he get rid of the sin ? For the trouble lies in this, that the sin becomes part of the man, it leaves a mark on his character which he cannot remove.

A man is in debt. Find the means to pay off the debt and he will be free. A man is ill. Treat the illness aright and he will be well and strong again. But let a man do wrong, and neither punishment nor penitence together can put him right again.

Sin means more than a debt to be discharged ; more than

a sickness to be cured, for it enters within and affects the man himself—the very personality.

Let me use a simple comparison.

I catch a cold, and am cured. It leaves no trace behind and soon becomes a thing altogether of the past—just an incident which may be completely forgotten.

But I commit a sin and the power of it remains. Nor does even human forgiveness take away that power.

Tell a man who has lost his temper with you that you forgive him. Tell him that every outburst is forgiven. Do you remove the power of his sin? Do you, by forgiveness, give him power to control himself in future? No, you don't.

And yet our human forgiveness follows quite naturally upon punishment and penitence, doesn't it?

So you may see the point at which I am driving, that there must be something more than human in forgiveness if ever our human and natural desires are to be satisfied.

Men have always hoped for a forgiveness that would really make them straight, would really make them free from sin and sin's effects. This is really the hope that lies at the root of every single religion. Men have always, in every age, recognised that human forgiveness is not sufficient. There is a need which completely fails to find satisfaction in the world of humanity.

So, when we tackle the question and try to get at the root of the problem, working out even as briefly as we have done in this chapter, the three points, punishment, penitence, and forgiveness, we find ourselves in a difficulty that no human ingenuity can fathom or remedy.

Well now, if that is so, if our reasoning and our human experiences lead us aright, we are compelled to admit that the Bible view of atonement has a reasonable basis.

There is an admitted human need—our examination of the themes of punishment, penitence and forgiveness have revealed it, even if our own consciousness did not. Is that need to be satisfied or not?

If it is not, then life becomes a hollow sham, filled with false hopes and can only end in tragedy. In witness of this

fact, I would draw your attention to the fact that in Japan there are hundreds of suicides every year amongst the student classes because they have failed to find in life that which their human hope desired. Education has revealed the worthlessness of their old religious superstitions, but has given them no other anchor of the soul.

But if the desire is to be satisfied, if we are to be saved from the tragedy of despair into which mere human reasoning leads us, how shall we be satisfied.

Now the Bible gives us a full and perfect answer to that question—an answer as complete as ever human mind can grasp and understand.

It speaks to us first in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, and so gives us a most interesting as well as a deeply helpful commentary upon the question of sacrifice.

Nearly every religion is built up on a foundation of sacrifice, and therefore the Bible takes up what is a natural human instinct.

The only religion which has no basis of sacrifice is the Buddhist, which began as a reaction against the extravagance and cruelty of Hindoo sacrifices. But as the Buddhist religion has become the most superstitious and most idolatrous religion in the world, it is a manifest failure in the attempt to build up a religion without sacrifice.

So the Bible does begin to answer our question in a way that we can understand—in a way that appeals to our human instinct and finds a response there.

Think, then, for a few minutes about one of the Old Testament sacrifices—that of the Great Day of Atonement. The chief ceremony of that day was the choosing of two goats.

Upon them the high priest laid his hands and made a confession of sins for himself and for all Israel. One goat was then sacrificed and its blood taken into the tabernacle, and the other was driven away into the wilderness.

Each of the goats was used as a symbol. The first shews that there must be a death for sin—that is the penalty that full justice demands. The second shews that God's forgive-

ness of sin carries that sin right away from men. So both the fear and the hope of mankind is justified. Man has always been afraid of the consequences of sin and yet has always hoped that some way of escape might be found. And the Bible's answer to him—to you and me—is yes, God has provided a way of escape. But the Bible does not leave us under the false impression that we can transfer our guilt to an animal, and that merely by sacrifice we are purified.

That is the mistake the heathen make. The Bible goes much deeper. In the great day of atonement, what is done is only a symbol—a symbol of God's willingness to forgive.

God's love is shewn in consenting to cover Israel's sins and not look upon them. In the heathen sacrifices, the vain belief is that the sacrifice of the animal has done all that is required and there is the end. The Bible makes its sacrifices prophetic—makes them point forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, and suggests to us that complete forgiveness is found in Him, and, along with forgiveness, the grace that will make it effective in purer lives.

We are sanctified, that is to say we are made pure—as if we had not sinned—"we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

We have studied together the points of punishment, penitence and forgiveness ; very briefly, I know, but yet quite sufficiently to get a proper idea, and to find that so far as our own human reasoning can carry us, there is a great human need still unfulfilled, still unsatisfied. Even our forgiveness of one another, no matter how sincere and loving it may be, leaves the real problem untouched. We come then to the Bible answer, and we ought, because of the failure of human ways and means, to approach the Bible answer with real hope and not in any spirit of doubt. And when we do look into the Bible, we find just the very answer humanity has been searching for. Our second step, very briefly touched upon, was the idea lying behind the atonement of Israel's high priest ; an idea that goes far

beyond the ordinary purpose of heathen sacrifices, inasmuch as it suggests a purifying forgiveness.

Now there can be no question about the prominence which is given to forgiveness in all parts of God's word. No matter where you look, you will find expressions of forgiving mercy that ought to rejoice every single heart. "I will heal their back-sliding, I will love them freely," is one of the scores of promises made to a sinful nation. "In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer," is another.

Oh, if only people would read the Scriptures, how great comfort would they find ?

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

And so I might go on, through page after page of the Old Testament. God's forgiveness, which, because it *is* God's, fills out the deep lack in human forgiveness.

And God's forgiveness finds its fulness, its climax in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who "was wounded for our transgressions, who was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Now, of course, it is easy to ask questions about this. Is it not written that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin ? Very well then, how can the blood of Christ avail ? If one sacrifice is not effective, how can another be ? If a man is unholy, through his own sin, how possibly can he be made holy by the action of another ?

Yet the Bible tells us with the greatest clearness and with the most definite emphasis, that this can actually take place through the act of mediation of Jesus Christ.

We are dealing, I know, with a mystery—but, then, when are we *not* dealing with mysteries in our human life ? When are we ever free from questions ?

The whole difference between ordinary sacrifices, which can never take away sin, and Christ's sacrifice lies in the personality of Christ, in the fact that He is the Eternal Son of God. And He acted for us, not only as man but as God. So whilst it is true that no action on my part can ever make another man holy—simply because I am unholy myself—the action of Christ can make man holy, because He Himself is perfect, because He is God.

So Christ suffered, the just for the unjust, the holy for the unholy, the pure for the impure, the righteous for the wicked, in order that man might be saved.

It is a great and glorious gospel that comes to touch our human need at that very point where all human help fails, and is bound to fail.

With all the good intentions in the world, our human infliction of punishment is liable to vindictiveness and injustice. Our laws can never be framed to meet individual cases. We are bound to work upon general lines. With all the sincerity we can command, our penitence always has some seed of selfishness in it and fails to reach the root of the matter. With all the love we can demonstrate, our human forgiveness often leaves a trace of rancour behind, and in the very nature of things can never reform the wrongdoer.

And God steps in, in the person of the Lord Who was crucified, and justice, repentance, forgiveness, all find their completion in Him.

For in that precious death of Christ on Calvary's Cross, we see no vengeful God demanding justice in wrath, but only a loving Father doing right, by His own most holy law, and thus making it possible for Him to shew mercy.

You and I have sinned—human punishment can never meet the case, nor could we ever bear the penalty of sin, the shutting out of ourselves from God and from the righteousness that surrounds God. Human penitence can never wash away sin. And so the Eternal Christ paid the penalty in our stead, and God, Who willeth not the death of a sinner, Who spares when we deserve judgment, is able

to exercise everlasting mercy towards us, because the justice which is wrapped up in our very idea of God is for ever satisfied. "For by the one offering of Jesus Christ, He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

And herein, I think, lies the secret of this Bible answer to our human need—in that it touches the heart as well as the mind. Our faith and hope in the Lord is a reasonable faith and hope, and it answers the questions that our reasonable minds ask.

But it also reaches that part of our life and experience which cold reason leaves untouched, it reaches the innermost depths of our hearts. And this, not in any way of sentiment, not in any way of superficial feeling, but with an appeal which calls to everything that is noble in us.

"You are not your own—you are bought with a price." Can you and I if ever we are to be worthy of the name of men and women, fail to answer to that call?

He Who loved us, and gave Himself for us, He Who died that we might live, He Who made atonement for us, calls us to accept His gracious gift and to use it to the full.

"Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

CHAPTER XVI

THE RESURRECTION

OVER the traditional site of the place of the Crucifixion and Burial of our Lord, in Jerusalem, there has been built a church—the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

It is in the keeping of five sections of the so-called Christian Church: the Roman Catholic, the Greek or Orthodox, the Armenian, the Syrian, and the Coptic.

The Protestant Churches, I am devoutly thankful to say, have neither part nor lot in it.

The building itself is not prepossessing. Indeed, one feels justified in saying that it is hideously ugly, both outside and inside.

On the day that I visited this church, the Romans were holding a service connected with what they are pleased to call “the Stations of the Cross.” What impressed both me and my companions about the service was the utter lack of reverence and reality. All was mechanical, monotonous, insincere. Indeed, the church and the service were both as unlike what one would have expected as it is possible to imagine. Not one of us felt that we were on holy ground. The smell of incense, the gaudy show, the tawdry hangings, all meant, I suppose to impress and to help devotion, only succeeded in revolting us.

In particular, the site of the “Tomb,” with its hideous covering, disgusted me, and led to an argument with the Roman priest who was acting as a guide.

One could not help noticing that this “traditional” site had nothing whatever in common with the description given of the Tomb in the Gospel stories.

It is not “rock-hewn” at all, but a built tomb. It is quite impossible to see into it by stooping down outside. I

pointed this out to my guide, and drew his attention to the fact that the whole story of John turns on these words : "Stooping down, and looking in, he SEETH . . ."

But absolutely nothing is discernible to anyone stooping down and looking into this traditional tomb, except there be first placed therein a lighted lamp. My guide did not seem to be acquainted with the Gospel account, and so, after a considerable pause for thought, he suggested that John did not see with his physical eyes, but only in a vision. He did not realise, in the least degree, that in so interpreting the Scripture, he was destroying the value of the evidence of John for the Resurrection.

John's account, and his evidence, is actually the most valuable in the Scriptures, but it depends for its value on the plain meaning of the words used. No "spiritual" interpretation, no "vision" explanation, is admissible.

Without realising it, that guide at the "Holy Sepulchre" was dealing the Christian Creed, which he and his fellow-worshippers profess to uphold, a deadly blow, for he was actually explaining away the evidence of John, through ignorance of the Scripture and lack of other knowledge.

But those who were responsible for the building of the church itself, are indeed to be blamed, along with those who are responsible for the conduct of the services of the church, because they have done so much to turn the truth of God into a lie, and to make the Christian Creed appear as a gross superstition.

Now the Christian Creed, the truth of which I wish to make plain to you, is concerned with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and with the resurrection of man.

"The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures," is the way it is expressed about Jesus Christ. 'I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come,' is one of the three ways in which the Creed speaks of our resurrection ; the others being : "The resurrection of the body," and "the resurrection of the flesh."

Paul, writing in 1 Cor. xv, 4, 20, says : "That He hath

been raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures. . . . Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep."

It is a tremendous claim for Paul to make, even though it be made in complete harmony with the Gospel story. For I think it will be admitted, or that the point may be conceded, that Paul's letter to the Corinthians was written before the Gospel story. Even if one takes into consideration that mystic document "Q," so dearly loved of the Higher Critics, though never seen by mortal eye, Paul's writing still holds an early place in the Scripture documents, and so may be considered as the first written statement of the Christian Creed which had been proclaimed for some years through the spoken word.

It is, then, a tremendous claim to make. Moreover, we notice as we read that Paul stakes not only our faith upon the truth of it, but even our very existence: "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain . . . ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable."

Without the resurrection of the Lord, Christianity is nothing better than any other creed or teaching. It is a delusion even more than other religious teaching. This Christianity has but pretended to give us a glimpse of heaven; it has mocked us by opening our hearts and minds to an apparently noble hope, only to close them again in blacker night.

That is Paul's view of the matter. For him, it is the Christian Creed or nothing. Even the old faith of Israel has proved to be worthless, for it has urged him on with hope in the Messiah, only to dash that hope at the last to the ground.

And it has been argued so many times, in complete reasonableness, that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most vital detail of the Christian Creed, upon which all else rests, that I do not think it at all necessary for me to

repeat the arguments now. Opponent and believer are both agreed on the point.

Christ is risen indeed, or else the grave has the final and complete victory over us all.

Therefore Paul is most careful to bring before his immediate readers the evidence by means of which he came to believe in the Resurrection of Christ.

It is actual historical evidence which he gives, and it was evidence that was capable of proof by his readers of that time. They were able to test his statements, and had it been possible for those statements to be refuted, we are entitled to declare that they would have been refuted. Certainly the onus of proof to the contrary is very much upon the opponent, and as he can by no possibility bring forward any proof whatever, any argument against the resurrection must rest, not upon the question of the evidence Paul details, but upon the actual idea of resurrection itself. It is clear from the writing of Paul that this was the very problem of his opponents then.

Some folk, even professing Christians, had already begun to question the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Was it the evidence, the historical evidence, that caused their doubt? No, not at all. That was not in dispute. It was the very idea of resurrection that troubled them and made them think that those who had seen the Lord after His resurrection had somehow been deceived.

If there is no such thing as resurrection, then there was no resurrection of Christ; and if no resurrection of Christ, then, says Paul, there is no possibility of Christianity. That argument leads Paul immediately to the consideration of the idea of the resurrection itself, in order to show that the Christian teachers have, and the Corinthian doubters have not, the backing of reason.

What do we mean by the resurrection of the dead?

"The theory of a physical resurrection is a travesty, a burlesque of the Scriptural doctrine . . . a good many people imagine that it is a Christian doctrine. But it is not. The Bible, so far from teaching it, most emphatically denies

it. There is, indeed, one passage in the Old Testament in which it seems to be asserted ; but that is a mistranslation. According to the Authorised Version, Job said : 'With my flesh shall I see God.' But in reality he said nothing of the kind. He said just the opposite. It should have been translated : 'Without my flesh shall I see God.' ”*

Now, whilst this quotation denies the common idea of the resurrection, denies that a physical resurrection is taught in the Bible ; even goes so far as to say that the Bible denies a physical resurrection, and applies the favourite trick of advancing “mistranslation” as a valid argument ; yet it does not deny the idea of resurrection, nor set it aside as an unreasonable idea. No, resurrection is acknowledged as a reasonable belief, and the author seeks to establish the idea in his book.

From my knowledge of modern thought, however, from my reading of present-day theology, and from frequent discussions with my fellow-men, both clerical and lay, I should be definitely inclined to say that this teaching of Professor Momerie, which created a great stir forty years ago, is very fully accepted as true to-day, and would be declared to be in harmony with the correct interpretation of the Bible.

Let us examine his statement, therefore, because such an examination will probably help us to get near the truth, and may enable us to decide whether we can accept the orthodox creed just as it stands, in the ordinary meaning of the words that are used to express the Creed.

That Creed speaks of “the resurrection of the BODY” and of “the resurrection of the FLESH.” The former is the more usual mode of expression, the latter will be found in the Baptismal Creed of the Church of England, as well as in some of the older forms of the Orthodox Creed.

Now actually, as Dr. Momerie tells us, you will not find in the Scripture either of these expressions. You will read instead of “the resurrection of the dead,” or simply “the resurrection.” You will even read of “the resurrection

*“Immortality” by Pro. A. W. Momerie.

FROM the dead." But where, may I ask, will you find anywhere in Scripture "an emphatic denial" of the idea of a physical resurrection. There is absolutely no such denial to be found, and the learned Professor had no right whatever to insert his own private opinion into Scripture.

By all means let him deny a physical resurrection, and let him advance his reasons for his opinions and beliefs. But let not such a man, setting out to "teach the truth" and to refute falsehood and misapprehension—let him not advance a deliberate untruth as an argument.

So very far from the Scripture emphatically denying the idea of a physical resurrection, it is impossible to take the Scriptural words, *honestly*, to have any other meaning. The phrases, "resurrection of the body," "resurrection of the flesh" may not be there, but the *idea* of such a resurrection surely is most certainly there. Evidently the early "Fathers" thought so, and consequently they inserted the idea in the Creeds, in such words as would declare the idea plainly. Moreover, they have been followed in their belief all the way down the Christian ages, by the accepted teachers of the Churches.

"Yes, quite so," says Professor Momerie, "but the Christian teachers took it from the Rabbis ; the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages took it from the Fathers ; and so, century after century, it has been transmitted from one set of theologians to another."

Very nicely put, Doctor. But when you write this, are you not really accusing the Christian teachers, beginning with Paul, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, and all other theologians, of a lack of independent thought ? Are you not suggesting that their theology was nothing more than a parrot-like repetition of phrases, that was worse than stupid ?

Was it reserved for you, Dr. Momerie, in the nineteenth century, to discover the truth of the matter, that had been hidden by the superstition of Paul, and the Church. Was it left for you, so late in the day, to scotch for good this

burlesque, this travesty of the Scriptural doctrine of Immortality ?

As a matter of very hard fact, which your own reading should have made known to you, your ideas have been discussed throughout the centuries, even by non-Christian writers ! Why, Plato, amongst other Greeks, went over the whole of the ground covered by your "pioneer" study. Yes, in charity, and with gentleness I would say it, that men every whit as learned, every whit as devout and honest in their thinking, every whit as *clear* in their thinking, have discussed your "unique" ideas, and have set them aside as unconvincing, even as unreasonable. They have concluded, after much study and thought, that the Bible does actually teach a physical resurrection, that though the words "of the body," "of the flesh," do not occur in that exact form, yet the idea is most certainly there.

What does Paul say ? . . . "It is raised a spiritual BODY." Have we any reason, worth advancing, for putting all our emphasis on the word "spiritual" and ignoring altogether the word "body" ? That word "body" is a vital word. It speaks of something very real ; of something even tangible. "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself : handle Me and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having." "Reach hither thy finger, and see My hands : and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My side." If those words do not speak of a physical resurrection, of a tangible body, what ever do they mean ? "Flesh and bones." I fancy that we shall find that our orthodox creed is right in its affirmation of a bodily resurrection, and that Professor Momerie, like so many both before and since his day, is busying himself with denying something that the Christian Creed never asserts, and that in order to deny this, he would sweep away the Creed. For, if I understand him aright, all that Dr. Momerie wishes to do is to deny that the body we actually possess at this moment rises again, as an entity, and continues as it is now. He actually uses the words,

“the resurrection of this *mortal* body.” He is anxious to get away from superstition and untruth, and from certain follies that have been suggested, if not actually taught. And in order to make his point, he ruthlessly sweeps aside the plain statements of Scripture, as if they were false, or as if they were not found in the Scripture.

Let us admit that some of the ideas of the resurrection are very crude, even very foolish. Let us agree that some of the Schoolmen wasted time asking and trying to answer silly questions. I would remind you that the scientists of this most enlightened twentieth century have written books, and delivered speeches in which things quite as ridiculous are set down and discussed in all seriousness.

Did Augustine enquire whether our hairs and nails would be restored to us ? Could anything, of the most superstitious or the most barbarian ages, ever match the wild and stupid absurdities that are set forward nowadays in the name of Science—skulls five hundred million years old, and such-like ?

But why should any enquirer after truth allow his eyes to be blinded, and his mind to become fogged by follies such as these ? Why not cut them out, and allow one’s thoughts to travel along reasonable lines ?

Professor Momerie and his disciples wax exceeding scornful over these crude ideas of the resurrection, under the impression that they are correcting the Christian Creed. In point of fact, however, they contribute little or nothing to the study of the Creed. They only destroy, by their criticism, ideas which the Creed never expressed, and never intended to express.

Let us now devote a little thought to the body that we have at present.

How long have we had it ? Not many minutes really, have we ? Is there not going on a perpetual change ?

We all realise our growth in early years ; we recognise the fact of our development from the baby to the full grown man ; but are we not apt to forget that growth does not cease when we reach the age of eighteen years or so ?

The body of to-day is not exactly the same as the body of yesterday. There is a never-ceasing passing and renewing of the body. It is most easily realised in such parts of the body as the nails and the hair, the parts that seem to have given Augustine rather a scholastic headache. Growth is persistent, and the corollary of growth is decay.

But though the body I now possess, and by means of which my very personality finds expression, is actually very different from the body I possessed forty, thirty, twenty, even ten years ago, it is still "my body," to all *practical* intents and purposes, the same throughout my life. It is exactly the same with the resurrection body of the Lord. The disciples were invited to notice that it was "I Myself," by looking at, and touching His body.

I—the personality that is called "I," must, of absolute necessity, have a physical body, a material body, through which the "I" can make itself seen and heard and felt and understood.

It is easy enough to say that the body is not "I"; that "I" am a spiritual entity. But to say, as many do, that the body is "nothing," and "unreal," is to talk nonsense. The very fact that the theorists who make the greatest play upon this idea of the "unreality" of the material body, devote a tremendous amount of time and attention to healing the body, or trying to heal it, by "mental application" or by "treatment," is sufficient to shew not only their inconsistency, but the error of their own theory. There is a material body, and it is essential for communion between one personality and another. "I" must use my lips, my tongue, and other parts of my body, in order to make my thoughts understandable to "you."

If you want to tell me that this is unnecessary—that such a thing as thought-reading can actually be achieved—and this was recently put forward in all seriousness by a "scientist" in argument with me, in a desperate endeavour to deny the reality of the body—I will simply ask you if you usually express yourself by such a method? Do you

even ever *try* to do so? Of course you don't, you use exactly the same means as I do.

The body, then, is a reality and a necessity. The spirit without the body would be unable to be in touch with life as it is now, and the body without the spirit cannot give or receive any impression at all.

Let us make no mistake about this, and do not be led away by high-sounding phrases or intellectual quibbles. For there are those who will tell you that it is not only possible for the spirits of the departed to speak to us, but that they actually do speak to us.

Well, let us admit, for the sake of argument, that the communications *claimed* as genuine actually *are* genuine. How are these communications made and received? They are made through a "medium," and they are both transmitted and received through the ear, the eye, the mouth. Therefore, even those who deny the necessity of the body, find themselves compelled to use it in their own "spiritual" exercises.

Now when we have got so far along the line of study, we have, I think, cleared the ground. We have prepared our minds to recognise that there must always be a body. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

The next step we must take is to realise that the spiritual body is the outcome of the natural body. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

Professor Momerie writes: "It is a resurrection not 'of,' but 'from,' the body." But is not this a quibble? Is it not a clouding of the issue by a juggling with words? The resurrection of *what* from the body? We are not told. We are left to assume that it is the spirit that rises from the body. Yet we have the words of the Lord Himself on the matter, and He tells us that He was not merely a spirit that had risen "from" the body. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold Me having."

So let us think of Paul's comparison: We cast a seed into the ground, and it germinates, and out of the rotted seed grows the stalk and head of corn. Truly God hath

given it a body as it hath pleased Him. But the new body is as material a body as the one from which it sprang. And we need to remember that it did spring from the seed. That is a vital point which those "Christians" completely overlook who wish to depart from the orthodox Creed.

The body that I have now will, if the Lord tarry, and present conditions continue, sink in corruption in the grave. But out of it there shall spring a new body. God shall give it a body as it shall please Him, by which I may continue to express my personality, and through which my personality may be recognised by others.

Truly, indeed, "it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption," yet it is "my" body. You may argue that it is an altogether different body, and therefore it has not been "raised."

I will answer first, so is the corn that has grown out of the seed; and second, that my present body is an altogether different body from the body that I had forty years ago; a vastly different body than I possessed at first, before conscious life began for me. Yet the one that I have now is the outcome of the one I had at first. I possess now powers, qualities, abilities, which I did not possess at first. I have acquired a certain amount of knowledge; I have developed virtues, gifts, capabilities, of which only the bare seeds were present at the first. I have eradicated certain faults and weaknesses of character that shewed themselves capable of development in me, to the detriment of the better qualities. I am a different man, and yet the same. And in exactly the same way, surely, though my resurrection body will have powers and qualities not as yet enjoyed by me, it will undoubtedly be the outcome of the body that I now possess.

I am aware of the fact that it is by no means easy . . . it may be thought almost impossible . . . to express the truth of the matter in words, but Paul's excellent illustration is sufficient to make our Christian Creed clear enough, and to enable us to avoid error.

We should have been saved much controversy and many

books would never have been written, many sermons never preached, if that illustration had always been borne in mind,—“Thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain, but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed its own body.” The seed determines what the plant shall be, and out of the seed the plant grows, but the seed is not the plant. The seed dies, that the life in the seed may clothe itself in a nobler form. But *the continuity is not broken*. Let us note this most carefully, for it is not only a plain fact, but upon it rests the main force of Paul’s argument. The continuity is not broken. “Times change,” we say, “and we change with them.” Yes, but the continuity of life and personality is not broken, nor does the body ever become unnecessary.

The resurrection of the body, then, is a reasonable faith, a justifiable belief; and being so, the converse of Paul’s words becomes reasonable. As there is such a thing as the resurrection of the body, the resurrection of Christ, with a body that could be seen and handled, becomes an admitted possibility. The witness, therefore, to that resurrection of Christ, as set forward by Paul, cannot by any manner of means be set aside by any reasonable man; and the suggestion that the witnesses Paul brings forward were deceived has to be set aside as not worthy of consideration by honest minds.

But someone may wish to continue the argument, refusing to admit himself as yet convinced. He may agree that the resurrection of the dead, even the resurrection of the Body, is reasonable and understandable. But in the case of Christ, this is less than we are asked to believe. We are asked to believe that He rose again “the third day.”

Friend, the difficulty is an imagined one, not a real one. It would be of little use any man believing that Jesus Christ *will* rise again, along with the rest of humanity, at some distant “resurrection day.” Were that all, Christianity would have neither reason for its existence, nor even possibility of existence. The very birth of Christianity lies

in the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the third day, and of His appearing to His disciples. If Jesus Christ had not risen again, if He had not appeared to His disciples, and had not eaten with them and conversed with them, as the Scripture records, then we are fully justified in saying, Christianity would never have been heard of, and it would be true that Paul and his fellows would be objects of pity. It does not require proof, for it is patent to any intelligence that the death of Christ was the death of hope in the disciples' breasts. "We hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel," and no vestige of hope remained.

I venture to suggest that the only possible—certainly the only reasonable—explanation of the extraordinary change that is recorded in the behaviour of the disciples, is that which the Scriptures give, that Jesus Christ was risen again, and had appeared unto them. And when Paul gives the historical evidence of the resurrection, he cannot be gainsaid by any reasonable man.

Our orthodox Creed, then, will stand the fires of criticism, and remains a clear statement of our true hope and faith.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SECOND ADVENT

MUCH has been written upon the subject of the Second Advent, and there has been almost as much controversy between Christians upon this doctrine as upon the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. To a very large extent the preaching ministry of the Churches ignores the subject to-day, or else sets forward an interpretation that approaches the view of Zionism, which looks forward to a "Messianic age" which has been ushered in by man's own efforts.

Now whilst differences of opinion about certain details of the Second Advent are likely to occur, are possibly inevitable, yet about the fact of the Second Advent there should really be no question amongst honest and intelligent disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, for any reader of the Scriptures may take note that the doctrine is there.

And it is just because the doctrine is so plainly there, whilst the Churches fail to preach it, that certain sects have arisen, professing to be Christian, and have led many astray. The doctrine is there ; the words in which it is stated are plain ; the Churches, even though they embody the doctrine in their creeds, neglect the preaching of it, so there is given an opportunity to Satan to produce some of those counterfeits at which he is an adept.

He produces Christadelphianism and Russellism.

Each of these counterfeits seizes upon the neglected doctrine of the Second Advent and preaches it. The fact of the doctrine is so plain in the Scriptures, that simple-minded people are attracted. Here is a Bible truth they have never heard in Church. Here is a Bible truth that opens out a way of light and hope in a darkened world. They mention the matter, possibly, to their own minister, and

in all probability he laughs at them for taking any such interest in so old-fashioned and unscientific an idea.

So they go away from their own Church to link up with the sect that preaches a doctrine that is so plainly set out in the Scriptures. I say "preaches a doctrine." It would have been more correct if I had said "appears to preach." For Satan's counterfeit has enough, and only enough of the truth to make the counterfeit deceptive and attractive.

And along with what is true about the Second Advent, these people are taught, with subtlety, denials of almost everything else in the Scriptures concerning Jesus. They learn to deny the Deity of Jesus Christ ; they learn to deny His salvation ; they are taught to expect a Kingdom in which the Jew has the chief seats ; they are taught that immortality is a gift bestowed only upon those who link up with the sect.

It is the old story—a man's worst enemies are they of his own household. The cause of Christ is hindered, and His truth suffered to languish, by the very Churches who are commissioned to be His witnesses.

But for the neglect of the doctrines of the Bible by the Churches, the false sects would never have arisen. And the only way for the Churches to combat these false sects is to preach, with zeal, the very Creed that is their charter.

Neglect to preach the Creed lets in the enemy who wraps up blasphemy and falsehood in a "sugar-coating" of Christ's truth, and thereby administers poison to thousands of deluded people.

Diverse opinions may be possible over details ; it is possible to argue that Paul changed his mind about the nearness of the Return ; one may discuss at length whether the Return is a process or an event ; whether there is an interval between the "Rapture," suggested in 1. Thess. iv, and the Return ; one may even question the meaning of the words, "in like manner." But these discussions have no direct bearing upon the main question ; they are nothing whatever to the point. The question is, "Does the Scripture declare that Christ will return ?" And to that

question, honesty and intelligence can give but one answer: Yes.

What possible difference can there be made to the *fact* of the Return, that there are disputes about the *manner* of it and the *time*?

The disputants have so beclouded the issue, have so wrangled over details in which private opinion enters, and should consent to differ, that the actual issue has been completely altered; and from denying opinions about the manner of the Return, the Churches' teachers have come to deny the fact of the Return. So unreasonable is man.

Let us be sure, then, that the Scripture declares the fact of the Return. We have it in the parables of our Lord; in His discourse on the Mount of Olives; declared by the angels at His ascension; taught most emphatically in the Epistles and the Revelation.

There is most abundant cause for the Church to have inserted in its chief creed, "Shall come again with glory." We British-Israelites, therefore, in preaching the Second Advent, shew that in this, as in the other doctrines I have explained, we are fully in accord with Catholic doctrine—using that word "Catholic" in its correct sense, and not in the incorrect sense of common parlance.

Now there are three Greek words used in the Scriptures to speak of the Second Advent. The first is "Parousia," which means "Personal presence."

There has been some attempt made to argue that the revisers of the Bible in 1881 sought to assist a particular view of the Holy Communion, by persistently putting in the margin the rendering "presence" as an alternative for "coming."

I do not think the attempt is quite a worthy one. Parousia has in it no idea of a spiritual presence, or a presence recognised by faith. It is a matter of *personal* presence that is involved.

Paul uses the same word—parousia—to refer to the visit from Corinth to him, with gifts from Corinth, of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. When he writes to the Philip-

prians to tell them that he hopes to visit them again, he uses the same word—parousia.

Are we justified in saying that the word must mean something else when used in connection with our Lord's Return ?

Surely, such a suggestion is more than foolish ? "Waiting for the parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ."—"Afterward they that are Christ's at His parousia."

"We which are alive and remain unto the parousia of the Lord."

In these three texts it is quite impossible to make parousia mean anything else than the "personal presence" of Christ at His Second Advent. It is not any spiritual presence ; it is not any presence, real or imagined, at any Holy Communion service.

It is a personal presence.

The second word is "Apokalupsis," which means "revelation," "unveiling," "making visible."

It is the word used by Paul in 2 Thess. to refer both to the Return of the Lord, and the revealing of the "Man of Sin." The one shall be as clearly seen by the eye of man as the other. We shall know who the "Man of Sin" is, because he will be revealed, and we shall see him. We shall also see the Lord, for He, too, will be revealed, made visible, at His coming.

Indeed, it is not possible to read Paul and doubt that Paul was writing of One Who would be as visible and as tangible at His Second Advent, as He was at His First. He was thinking and writing of the "Word made manifest, become flesh, handled, heard, seen."

The third word is "Epiphaneia." We have but to think of our own "Epiphany" season, at which we commemorate the "manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles." We remember the Magi and their gifts, their homage.

The "appearance" or "brightness" or "manifestation" then, was of Christ in the flesh, visible to the human eye. Shall we say that it means anything different when Paul uses the word ?—

“Whom the Lord shall destroy at His Epiphaneia.”

Let us be consistent, and we shall admit that ingenuity has a hopeless task when it seeks to get away from the Scripture doctrine of the Personal Return.

Say that you do not believe the Scriptures, say that you cannot accept the statements of the Scriptures. But do not say that the Scriptures do not declare the Second Advent, and do not attempt to justify your unbelief by any quibble about the meaning of the Greek words. Unbelief may deny the doctrine itself ; if it wishes to be so foolish.

Unbelief cannot deny the Scriptural declaration of the doctrine of a Personal Return. Whilst a professing Christian, who as a Christian accepts the Bible as the authority, has simply no case against the doctrine.

Honesty must admit that. And let us remember in this connection that even the Church of Rome, with all its claims about Church authority and papal infallibility, comes down to the Bible in its attempt to justify its claims.

So, then, even the Church of Rome makes the Bible its final authority.

Therefore, the fact of the doctrines of the Personal Return must be admitted by all Christians. And as I have already remarked, it is stated in our creed. Any dispute then that arises about the *manner* of the Return, must be on some issue other than that of “personality.” Disputants are fond of advancing theories as arguments, and imagining that a difficulty that presents itself to the mind is a conclusive argument *against*. “I do not see *how* Christ can come again ; for we are told, ‘Every eye shall see Him.’ How can people in China see Him at the same time as people in Britain ? You ask me to believe too much, when you ask me to accept the plain word of Scripture.” How eager is doubt to read into Scripture what is not there. Does the Scripture say that every eye shall see Him ; *all simultaneously* ? Doubt is often so very querulous and unworthy in its statements of unbelief.

Do you admit that Jesus Christ once walked this earth, and taught in Galilee and Judea ?

You must admit it, or stamp yourself at once as an *ignoramus*, not to say a fool. Do you admit the Scripture statement that He came from God ?

You must admit this if you call yourself a disciple. An atheist or other opponent of Christianity is at liberty to deny it, if he produces his proofs. A Christian is not at liberty to deny it or even question it. Then if He came *once*, He can come again. You are not at liberty to say, "I do not see how," and consider that an argument against. The question of "How ?" does not enter in.

Did He, or did He not, come 1,930 years ago? He did, and we have the historic records and the Scripture statements of this Coming.

Then everything that is called "science" is of necessity on our side when we declare that the Second Advent is within range of practical possibility. Your own reason, then, bids you put doubt on one side.

In any question as to the manner of His Coming, the fact of the Personal presence must be admitted, and the question limited to details outside that fact.

As to the manner of His Personal Coming, let it be admitted that there is, and can well be, diversity of opinion. It is not possible for any man to be dogmatic on this matter and declare that he is right and such as disagree with him are wrong. There is a possibility of diversity, because the Scriptures are not so definite about the manner of the Coming as about the fact of the Coming. There are texts which speak of Him coming "like a thief in the night." There are texts which say that "as the lightning cometh forth from the east and is seen even unto the west."

Both expressions may mean the same thing. Both may refer only to the fact that the Coming will not be expected by the world. But some take the diversity of expression to mean that there will be stages in the Coming. Some students see in the "Rapture of the Saints" (1. Thess. iv, 17) the first stage of the Coming; and they presume an interval between the first stage and the actual visible Coming. I do not think it is possible for us to settle the

issue in these and other similar questions. Let us be assured that He is coming, and let us be watchful. Let us be prepared in faith that the day may not overtake us "as a thief."

If others differ from us on details, let us agree to differ. It will make no difference to the preparedness and fitness of any, whether he expect an interval between the Rapture and the Return, or deem the two to be practically simultaneous.

The Lord is coming again ; He is coming to rule over this earth ; His reign will mean definitely a binding of Satan and the powers of Satan. Peace shall be the earth's portion, and prosperity shall bless the labours of mankind.

Even though many serve Him through constraint, yet all shall serve Him, and the way be prepared for the dawn of that most glorious era when the Tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them ; when all things shall be subdued under Him, and God is all in all.

CHAPTER XVIII

A SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

I AM come now to the end of my book and I wish to put before you the final argument in the form of a parallel.

Not very long ago there was a leading article in what is possibly the most widespread of Church newspapers, *The Church Times*. The writer was gravely concerned about the distressing increase in the number of believers in British-Israel identity. And, indeed, that there has been a marked increase, especially in the number of ordained ministers of the Church, is a fact that we must thankfully acknowledge.

I can speak from my own experience of the annual congress of the British-Israel-World Federation. At my first congress there were but 2 other clergy on the platform with me. At the last there were 32 at one meeting, besides others in the hall, and 18 of these bore their own personal witness to the reasons that had brought them into the movement.

But to revert to *The Church Times*.

“The fundamental mistake these British-Israel theorists make is to take the promises of the Old Testament literally ; and, of course, they were never meant to be taken literally.”

I think that in this extraordinary statement we have a very fine specimen of what in logic is called, “begging the question.” That which ought to be proved, is stated as a fact. One might answer this writer very bluntly, by saying that of course we take the promises of the Old Testament literally. We might even express ourselves strongly and suggest that every person who reads the Scriptures with intelligence will naturally take those Scriptures to mean what they say. Why on earth should anyone take the promises to mean something which they do not say ? Yet

without advancing the slightest shadow of a reason for his theory, this writer tells us that Scripture promises must never be taken to mean what they say. "They were never meant to be taken literally." Extraordinary ; most extraordinary.

But if I were to promise that same writer the sum of £100 sterling for his church funds he would most certainly take my words literally, and would be most indignant with me . . . probably he would call me unchristian names . . . if I told him that I only meant the promise spiritually or in some mystical way.

But if this statement of his were correct his argument would destroy not only our British-Israel Creed, but the Creed of the Christian Church as well.

And that is what I shall try to shew you now.

Here are two theories . . . the Messiah theory and the British-Israel theory.

I call them both theories, deliberately, for though both to me are facts and one is a fact to all true Christians, yet inasmuch as my purpose is demonstration I must perforce call them both theories for the moment.

The Messiah theory is this : The person whom we call Jesus of Nazareth and whom we worship as the Eternal Son of God, is the Messiah promised to Israel and the Saviour promised to the world.

The British-Israel theory is, as has been stated at the beginning of this book, that the British are the lineal descendants of Israel.

Now how must we set to work to prove these theories ? How shall we seek to establish them as facts, worthy of all credence ? The method we apply to the one is exactly the same as the method we use for the other.

In both cases, in the final issue, it is the Scriptures that must decide.

The Church Times says that so far as Israel is concerned, the Scriptures are not to be taken to mean what they say. Very well, then, are we to take the Scriptures to mean what they say when they speak of the Messiah ?

The answer, logically, must be the same in both instances. No man has a shadow of right to answer "No" to one and "Yes" to the other. No man has a shadow of right to say that the Old Testament promises were meant to be literally fulfilled, and actually were literally fulfilled, in the case of the Messiah, but that they were never meant to be literally fulfilled in the case of Israel.

If, in logic, we were allowed to pick and choose, and decide for ourselves, what "premises" we should take literally and what not, we should simply land ourselves into all sorts of ridiculous conclusions. And that, frankly, is what the "spiritual" and "mystical" interpreters of the Bible have done.

Unless we have a clear, sound reason for acting otherwise, we must apply exactly the same method of interpretation to the Israel promises, that we do to the Messiah promises. Now no orthodox Christian would ever dream of suggesting that the Messiah promises do not mean what they say. But *The Church Times* and those who adopt the same line of argument refuse to take the Israel promises literally, simply because there is only one conclusion to be drawn from such a literal interpretation. Such people are quite willing to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah. What they will not have—and I often marvel at their refusal—is Britain as Israel.

Jesus is Messiah. How shall we prove it? Upon what does our faith really rest? Some will tell me that they are content to rest that faith upon the tradition of the Catholic Church. Now I do not despise such a reason by any means. I gladly accept the Catholic tradition. It is sound and wholesome . . . *when it happens to be Catholic*. But even a child will know that there is much that is called Catholic which is certainly not accepted by all Christians, and every thoughtful person must realise that there is bound to be some foundation for Catholic tradition.

The Church—we use that term very loosely, I am afraid; but we all have a fairly good idea of the connotation of the term—the Church does not teach anything it likes to in-

vent. It has a definitely accepted and declared creed. I am aware that some so-called churchmen teach ideas of their own. I shall be told that I do. But that is beside the mark. The CHURCH does not. It has a definite creed, that has been settled by the councils of the Church in the early Christian centuries.

There are various ways of interpreting that creed, I know. Some Churches, or shall I say, some churchmen, have fantastic ways of interpretation, and have so covered up the creed with false accretions, that it is exceedingly hard to recognise the creed, or to discover the modicum of Christianity.

All that is really beside the mark, too.

The fact remains that the Church has a creed, to which even the most modern of modernist parsons gives at least a nominal assent ; and the central idea of that creed is that Jesus is the Christ. How did the Church get the idea, and how can it prove the truth of the idea ?

The Church does not say, "This creed has been taught from the beginning and it is therefore true." It is believed, that is, because the Apostles first taught it, and it has been so taught and handed on through the centuries.

For though, for example, the council at Nicea, A.D. 325, decided its creed upon apostolic doctrine, it was not the age of the doctrine that was the basis of argument. No, the Church can only logically say, "This creed, which we believe and teach as the apostolic doctrine and as true, is so taught because it rests as the apostles themselves rested it, upon a foundation of fulfilled prophecy. In other words, the foundation of the creed is formed by the Old Testament promises concerning the Messiah, taken in their literal meaning.

Jesus came, in the fulness of time, as the fulfilment of a long series of promises and prophecies. He Himself based His claim and the apostles after Him proved His claim, by declaring that He came to fulfil these promises. And it is only by a study of these prophecies that the claims of Jesus of Nazareth and His apostles can be tested. There

may be, there actually are, other ways of shewing the reasonableness and the probability of the Christian creed; but the way of the Old Testament promises is the way of certainty. When the prophecies are studied and compared, point by point, with what Jesus *was*, and *did*, and *said*, then, and then only, is a man able to say that Jesus is Messiah.

It is no use any man attempting to argue that there is no such thing as prophecy. Such an attempt means that the arguer has absolutely shut his eyes to the plain, historical fact that the prophecies were made, and that they have been completed in Jesus Christ.

It is no use suggesting that faith can rest upon personal conviction, or upon personal experience. If a man's convictions cannot be proved in the way that the apostles set out to prove the truth of Jesus then they become credulity and superstition.

I am fully aware of the fact that faith is the substance of things *hoped for*, the test of things *not seen*.^{*} But this does not mean that faith is contrary to reason, or that it is beyond the test of reason. If a faith will not bear the light of reason, it must go ; a reasonable man cannot accept it.

Is it not a fact that there are creeds, both civilised and uncivilised, that are most tenaciously held with strong conviction, and with the claim of personal experience, that you and I must set aside as being completely contrary to reason?

I am asked, for example, to accept as a matter of faith a belief that my sight, my sense of smell, my sense of touch, my sense of taste, all in company with my reason tell me is a false belief. Yet it is a belief held by millions and is bolstered up by every claim of "authority."

Or I am asked to accept, as a man who has received the final revelation of God, a teacher whose moral life will not bear investigation and whose revelation involves the degradation of womanhood.

Or again, I am advised by a scientist of this enlightened twentieth century to accept as true and genuine messages from beyond the veil that have come through the agency of

^{*} Heb. xi, 1. R.V.M.

an illiterate child who cannot speak half a dozen words of consecutive sense.

All these things, and hundreds like them, are matters of "conviction" and "personal experience." But of what value are they to the reasonable man? Surely they have no value at all, except to shew him how credulous and superstitious even educated people can become?

But the revelation of Jesus of Nazareth begins away back in the past ages of prophecy, and it continues even to this day. And it was by a constant reference to the teachings, the plain and literal statements of the Old Testament promises, that the apostles, following the example of Jesus Himself, sought to establish the claims of Jesus.

And those "Fathers of the Church" in council, framed the creed of the Church, by this light, and by none other. Now in exactly the same way, one proves the British-Israel theory.

There are four sets of prophecy in the Old Testament which are concerned with the whole of Israel. There are the threats of punishment upon Israel; threats of punishment upon Judah; promises of blessing and restoration for Israel; promises of blessing and restoration for Judah. Just as it is an historical fact that the Messianic promises have been accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth, to the shewing that He is indeed Messiah, so it is an historical fact that the threats of punishment have been literally fulfilled upon both Israel and Judah.

There is no getting away from the fact and it will be readily acknowledged by every sensible person.

It is also true to say that a considerable section of the Christian Church expects the literal fulfilment of the promises of restoration of the Jews.

There are many sincere and earnest Christians who think that the Jews are all Israel and who work for the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, just because they expect the literal fulfilment, upon the Jew, of these Old Testament promises to Israel and Judah. And there is no getting away from that fact. Then why should any reasonable

man ever wish to say that the promises to Israel "were never meant to be taken literally"? Does it not amount to this, that such a man has given the "right about turn" to his logic?

Now I have shewn, from the Scriptures, the difference between Israel and the Jews and I need not repeat the arguments now.

We come, then, to this point. The threats of punishment upon Israel have been literally fulfilled. That must be granted by any student of history, by any one who lays claim to intelligence. The threats of punishment upon the Jews have been literally fulfilled, and I shall enlarge upon this point in a moment. The promises of blessing upon the Jews are taken to mean what they say, by a considerable number of earnest Churchmen. But the blessings foretold for Israel are for the Church, are they not? That is the definitely expressed view and belief of the average churchman. He talks about "spiritual Israel," though the Scripture never gives the least jot or tittle of foundation for any such idea.

When a curse is pronounced upon Israel or Judah no churchman or commentator would dream of translating Israel into the Church, or of taking the word as meaning anything but literal Israel, the seed of Jacob according to the flesh. But the moment a blessing is promised, they give, as I have put it, an amazing "right about turn" to their logic, and say, "This is for spiritual Israel, the Church."

It will not be amiss if we spend a minute or two trying to realise the absurdities which this "muddle-headed" (forgive the term) logic leads good men into.

Dr. Pusey, commenting upon the Fifth Monarchy of Daniel ii, says, "No one has been found to doubt that it is the Kingdom of Christ. Eighteen centuries have verified the prediction of the permanency of that kingdom . . . a kingdom one and alone since the world has been; embracing all climes and times, and still expanding, unworn by that destroyer of all things human, time; strong amid the decay

of Empires ; the freshness and elasticity of youth written on its brow." And Dr. Pusey means the Church, if you please, by the Kingdom of Christ !

How I wish that what he wrote had even a modicum of truth in it. How I wish that the Church was one and alone. How I wish that it did embrace all times and climes, and was still expanding. But surely no one can even attempt to argue that Dr. Pusey was reviewing *facts* ?

You look, for example, at the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the Kingdom of Christ, and will you suggest that the Church to-day is one great happy family, and that the animal world knows peace and security within its fold, along with the children of men ? Is it true that the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea ?

Yet Dr. Pusey, an earnest and good man, a devout churchman, declares that "no one has been found to doubt" his interpretation, which necessitates the answer "Yes" to these questions. How can I say "Yes" when my eyes and ears tell me to say "No" ? The visible Church is simply torn asunder with quarrels and divisions. The work of missions, great as it is, is still the work of a small minority of churchmen. Moreover, all the conversions to Christianity, brought about by all the work of all missionary agencies in a year, do not come within one thirtieth part of the increase in the world's population. And as for universal peace . . . well . . . well !

Then is it not more than a little absurd to talk about the Church having fulfilled the place promised to Israel in the Old Testament, or even being engaged in fulfilling it ?

And so we find Canon Driver, himself blinded by and obsessed with the idea that the Church is the Israel of the blessing, writes, "Many of the Old Testament prophecies have never been fulfilled and circumstances have so altered that they never will be fulfilled."

He sees and avoids the pitfall of Dr. Pusey, but at what a cost does he save himself ! He saves himself by arguing that the Lord God Omnipotent is subject to circumstances

over which He either has no control, or which He did not foresee, when He made His promises to Israel.

But how are we to avoid these same mistakes ? Simply by being consistent in our treatment of Scripture, and either taking all the promises to mean what they say, or else taking none of them to mean what they say.

We have seen that the Christian creed rests for its final proof upon the Scripture promises concerning Messiah. Is there anyone who will question this statement, that the history of the Jews throughout the last 2,000 years and more, is a history that exactly accords with Scripture prophecy ?

Is it not true that for centuries the Jews have found no ease among the nations whither they have been scattered ; that they have lived with trembling hearts, fearing day and night, having no assurance of life ? Has not the Jew in Spain, in Russia, in Germany, had terrible cause to cry in the morning, "Would God it were even," and in the evening, "Would God it were day" ? Have they not stumbled at noonday as in the night ?

Think, for example, of the Crusades. By a process of reasoning that it is not difficult to follow, the massacre of Jews and the plunder of Jews were held to be rightful preliminaries to each of these "chivalrous" expeditions to the East. It was "unbelievers" whom the Crusaders were setting off to fight, and here were "unbelievers" of an older kind than Moslems, dwelling in their very midst. Was it not as well to begin with them ?

Money, too, was wanted for these "holy" wars. Was not Jewish wealth conveniently close at hand ? Killing was surely no murder when Jewish unbelievers were the victims ? To use Jewish treasures in so "sacred" a cause could not possibly be called robbery ? That was Crusading logic.

But the Jews were always so slow to appreciate the much sung chivalry of the middle ages. They saw only the seamy side of it. "An age of most wicked and fiendish persecution opened for the Jews, then, with the first Crusade of

1096, and the frenzy of fanaticism and intolerance which were called forth under the name of Christian chivalry, spread like an epidemic, and the undisciplined hordes of the Crusaders left behind them a trail of Jewish blood."

Is there anyone who will challenge this further statement, that since A.D. 1750 a change has come over Jewish fortunes, so far as many countries are concerned? From the moment of granting religious liberty to the Jews in Britain there has been a steady, if slow, improvement in the Jewish status in most countries, but most especially and most markedly in the British Empire.

The history of the Jew, then, like the history of the Lord Jesus Christ, is a clear and unmistakable commentary upon the prophetic Scripture, shewing its literal fulfilment. Yet again, when we examine the threats of judgment upon Israel, as distinct from those upon the Jews, we shall find that they have been exactly fulfilled.

It would seem almost a waste of time dealing with the matter, a heavy labouring of the point, but for one thing . . . the extraordinary blindness of the theologian.

It is a true proverb which tells us that the blindest of folk are those that will not see, and so, if I have seemed to labour this point of the fulfilment of the threats, you will, I hope, forgive me, as I try to point out the definite implication, the logical corollary of this fact. For it simply must follow that the promises of blessing to Israel were meant for literal fulfilment upon Israel the nation, and not for spiritual fulfilment upon any Church, or for fulfilment upon the Jews.

And the blindness of the theologian is here . . . in that he refuses to acknowledge that these blessings were meant by God to be completed in Israel the nation. He refuses, it appears to me, simply because such an acknowledgment would compel him to agree with our British-Israel case, and for a reason that I have never yet been able to discover, there is a grim determination on the part of many, not to have the privilege which God has offered them. They per-

sist, against all the dictates of common-sense and logic, in applying the promises to the Church.

Here is an example from a book entitled "The Way of Peace." The writer reviews the downfall of Israel and Judah, carefully distinguishing between the two. He shews how prophecy was fulfilled in judgment, first upon one, then upon the other. Then he writes, "For the now rejected Chosen People, God substituted His Chosen Church."

Wherever did the writer get his idea of this rejection? He certainly never got it from the Bible, for the Bible never suggests such a substitution. Indeed, Paul declares exactly the opposite, that God has NOT cast away His People. It rather seems, does it not, that Bible readers have been somewhat puzzled to account for the disappearance of Israel from the stage of visible affairs in the world; that some of them realise the difference between Israel and Judah, and can see no possibility of any fulfilment of the blessings upon the Jew, and so they search round for some other explanation of the promises, coming to the illogical conclusion that these particular promises, unlike all other promises, can't mean what they say?

It is really a tragic conclusion to reach, for it actually defeats the very end it seeks to establish. For it seeks to establish the truth of God's word, by denying the power of God to keep His word, or to work out His purpose according to His Own statement of that purpose.

Have the promises been fulfilled: 1, in the case of the first coming of the Messiah; 2, in the case of the threats against Israel; 3, in the case of the threats against Judah; 4, in the case of the revival of the Jews? The historic records say "yes." And surely so sane person will ever want to question history's verdict?

Very well, then, we are surely entitled to look for the historical fulfilment of the blessings promised to Israel? For let us carefully note this fact, that Christianity itself, as distinguished from all other religions, is absolute and historical. It gives its revelation in facts, which are an

actual part of the experience of Israel and Judah, as well as of human experience. It was prepared for its preaching in the world by a long national development. The forerunner of it was the religion of Israel, which was a prospective religion, and which is only really intelligible through that Christianity to which it led. It is therefore essentially an historical religion, historical in its antecedents, and in its realisation. Consequently, we are entitled to expect the historical fulfilment of the promises to Israel, as distinct from the Jews.

If I put it this way, that the truth and honour of God are wrapped up in His "consistency," I am not putting it in any too strong a way.

Man, I know, is inconsistent, but he has no right, in his religious controversies, to fasten his own inconsistency upon Almighty God.

And I venture to suggest that at least one reason, and by no means a minor reason, why agnosticism, and indifference to Christianity, are so marked a feature of this age, is that the propagators of the Christian faith have fastened inconsistency upon God.

Let us be consistent. There is the historical proof of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ; of the judgment prophecies on both Israel and Judah; there is the Jew before us, as a living witness to the truth of the Old Testament.

Then let us complete the cord, by a willingness to recognise the truth of the Israel promises, fulfilled in Britain. And let no man, henceforth, ask that common yet amazing question, "What good is it?" An amazing question, truly, and one that is usually preceded by the words, "If British-Israel is true."

It has been well said that the eighteenth century intellectuals spent their time trying to prove that there is no God; and that the twentieth century intellectuals spend their time ignoring God.

Those who ask the question, "If British-Israel is true, what good is it?"—and most of the questioners are clergy—

are in point of hard fact, placing themselves in the ranks of those who seek to ignore God.

God's Truth, God's Honour, are concerned absolutely with His consistency, and British-Israel identity establishes that consistency.

Without British-Israel identity the cord is broken and the Christian Creed left like a table with three legs.

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